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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1897.

Weeping Ferry.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS.

PROLOGUE.

ELISABETH VYNE was making bread, and Tryphena Dangerfield sat on the corner of the table, swinging her legs in all the short-skirted freedom of fourteen. Mrs. Filkins stood with her foot on the fender, drying her petticoat at the fire, which burned brightly on the hearthstone, under the wide chimney, and meditatively munching a bit of her sister-in-law's cake. It was past noon, and the white mist which in the early morning clings to the surface of the river and the low meadows, now floated diaphanous in the air, lending a softness to the sunshine and a deeper purple to the distance. The willows and great elm-trees were little by little exchanging the cold bluish greens which they put on at the first approach of autumn, for the warm yellows of mid October, and the sunflowers in the Manor garden had rents in their big leaves, though they held their heads as high as ever. The fuchsia bush and the blue Michaelmas daisies were still in flower, and the air was full of the scent of mignonette, which never smells so sweet as in the autumn sunshine.

The path by which the flowers grew was paved. It started from a gateway with squared piers, which had once been surmounted by two big stone balls. Only one now remained in its place; the other lay in the field outside, half overgrown

with grass. A short flight of steps brought the path down to the level of the house, and to the left a grassy walk led up to a broad green terrace, surrounded by a yew hedge.

The grey Manor House with its stone mullions and blazoned porch, the garden with its last remnants of formality, suggested visions of ladies in jewels and brocade, and cavaliers with delicate hands clapt to ready sword-hilts. But very likely it had been neglected almost ever since it was made, and the Bampton's whose arms decorated the porch had been for the most part homely folk, seldom better educated, and on a week-day scarcely better dressed than Elisabeth Vyne, who now made bread in their place.

'Mrs. Vyne,' said Tryphena imperiously.

Elisabeth measured the dough on the board with her eye and pulled a bit off before she replied:

'Yes, Miss Tryphena.'

'Why is blue cheese blue?'

Mrs. Vyne deposited the superfluous dough in the big red pan at her side, and powdered the remainder with flour. Then she answered mildly:

'Some folks do say it's the stuff that's put in it.'

'But you don't put stuff in yours, do you?'

'Oh dear, no, Miss,' and Mrs. Vyne smiled.

'Then why is it blue?'

Mrs. Vyne passed the rolling-pin over the dough several times.

'Other folks say it's the land,' she replied at length, with the same mild impartiality.

'But you made it the same when you were at the Meades, didn't you? So what makes it blue?'

'There's folks do say 'tis the season of the year,' returned Mrs. Vyne, carefully shaping the two balls of her loaf; then clapping the smaller one firmly on to the larger, she added with sudden frank contempt, 'But they none of 'em knows what they're talkin' about.'

'Then what's the real reason?' asked Tryphena, eagerly.

Elisabeth looked meditatively at the dough in her pan. 'There's just enough for one more—old Catharine's,' she observed. 'Wouldn't you like to make old Catharine's little loaf, Miss Tryphena?'

'Yes, I should awfully, Mrs. Vyne. But do tell me what you think yourself about the cheese.'

'I do think 'tis very good to eat with bread, Miss,' returned Elisabeth placidly, 'and if I don't make haste to get oven hot, we shall have none to eat it with. But there! I'd quite forgot you wanted to see me make Spotted Dick. I'll run and get some currants directly, that I will.'

And she left the room with a step that was still light, in spite of her thick-set figure and fifty odd years. Mrs. Filkins was smiling to herself.

'You won't get nothing out of Lizzie she ain't got a mind to tell you, Miss,' she said. 'Lor'! She's as close as the grave, she is!'

Mrs. Filkins looked like a Jewess, but she was an English-woman, and Thomas Vyne's sister. She was a tall woman with a yellow skin, marked features, and a quantity of oily-looking dark hair, dressed in a large chignon and surmounted by a large comb. The sisters-in-law were as unlike as possible. Elisabeth Vyne's hair was light brown, she was fair-skinned and blue-eyed and talked in the high-pitched West Country voice, while Mrs. Filkins spoke with the Cockney vulgarity of the Midlands.

'I call it nonsense to make a mystery about cheese,' pouted Tryphena, chagrined.

'I don't hold with answering little gals' questions myself,' returned Mrs. Filkins. 'There's no end to 'em if once you begin. But 'Lisabeth's awful close about everything. She don't seem to want sympathy the same as I do.' And Mrs. Filkins, who had a liver which she mistook for a heart, sighed and slowly shook her large jet earrings. 'It's surprising 'ow cheerful she is, although she's 'ad her troubles, like the rest of us. Tom's not always been steady, and she've lost the two children that were her favourites, Jim and Bessie. Well, people's 'earts are made different! You could have knocked me down with a feather when I 'eard poor Bessie was dead. A young girl like that took off so sudden. But 'Lisabeth 'ardly said a word about it, and sent an extry lot of butter to the shop the same week.'

Here Mrs. Vyne came back with the currants, and Mrs. Filkins continued, addressing her:

'I was just saying to Miss Tryphena what a light 'eart you have, Lizzie; always keeping 'appy through all your troubles. So different from me.'

'Well, I've got plenty of work to do, Miss; that's where it is; and I enjoy my work too. See now, you mix a few currants and some sugar with the dough, and that do make the Spotted Dick.'

'So different from me,' repeated Mrs. Filkins, with lugubrious pride. 'Now I'm that low-sperrited some days I can sit down and cry and cry for no reason whatever. My feelings always 'ave been so acute.'

'You couldn't afford it if you was me,' replied Elisabeth, without any intention of sarcasm, but making a statement of fact.

'I am sure I took on more about that child I was going to adopt, dying than you did about Bessie. It quite haffected my appetite. But then you've got other children, and ail doing well.'

'Yes, they be all doing well,' repeated her sister-in-law slowly. 'Now, Miss, do you make old Catharine's loaf nicely, for she be fine and particular, I can tell you. There she is, bringing clay to close up oven door; but she won't come in when visitors are here, and she'll scold me, that she will, for having them the day she's about.'

'She doesn't mind me,' replied Tryphena, beginning to make up the remains of the dough into a small loaf, 'but I'm awfully afraid of her. She's a regular old witch, muttering spells in unknown tongues.' A little figure, infinitely withered and dwindled yet still upright, had come slowly down the steps to the porch, carrying a pail, and now a small white face was peering at the window. Half a century ago the face had been pretty, but now it was wrinkled and shrunken and curiously blanched, under the crisp hair of a bright yellow colour, flecked with white, which covered the strange little head.

'I can't think why you have her about,' said Mrs. Filkins; 'she's a deal too old to be of use.'

Mrs. Vyne had stepped to the window and was moving her lips, with a grotesque exaggeration of the movements of speech. Old Catharine moved hers in reply, and strange sounds, low mutterings unexpectedly and momentarily breaking out into loud hoarse utterance, proceeded from them.

'Ugh! She's horrid!' exclaimed Tryphena. 'Do you understand her, Mrs. Vyne?'

'I don't understand all she do say, poor thing; only a few words of it. She's going to put clay down outside.'

Elisabeth opened the door of the great oven in the wall. There were still some embers of the wood with which it had been heated, lying on its floor, and sending a red glow into its cavernous depths.

'What a splendid oven!' exclaimed Tryphena. 'I should like to get into it and be baked.'

'You wouldn't like to be plastered up so as you couldn't get out,' replied Mrs. Vyne, shovelling out the embers. 'That's what we have to do with the bread, and a nasty job too. I've spoken to landlord about it times, but there! men is all the same, be they high or low. They think our work does itself, for all the world like the grass a-growing.'

Mrs. Filkins shook her head and sighed an inarticulate Amen.

'That reminds me,' she said, 'I must go back and see how that girl's cooked the dinner. We've got Percy Hicks and his wife coming in. She ain't much to look at, but he seems pleased enough! Have you seen her yet, Lizzie?'

'No,' answered Elisabeth. 'I haven't seen much of him this long while.'

Mrs. Filkins put on her hat and beaded mantle. While doing so, she exclaimed:

'Why, 'Lisabeth, you've got another photo of Milly! I wonder she was taken in that nurse's dress, for all the world like a servant! I heard from a friend of mine at Swindon, as that invalid lady she lives with, treats her pretty near like a daughter. And Thomas was telling me too, how well Tom and Jacob are doing in New Zealand, and Jacob going to be married now. It's no wonder you don't fret over your losses, when the children you've got left are doin' so well.'

'You've got no children of your own, Harriet, or you wouldn't talk sich nonsense,' replied Elisabeth, with a slight compression of the lips.

'No, I've not,' returned Mrs. Filkins; 'I do believe it's that weighs on my mind and makes me so low-sperrited, though I can't always think of the reason. It's wonderful the luck you've had with your children. All of 'em a comfort to you, for that Jim and Bessie were to the last. Yes, I do think you've got reason to be thankful, Lizzie; there's many 'as 'ad worse trials nor you've 'ad.'

So, full of vicarious contentment, Mrs. Filkins made her adieux affably and departed.

Elisabeth remained silent, wiping her clayey hands on her clean apron. The lines on her forehead had deepened, her mouth was pinched as though with pain, and her blue eyes had a fixed far-away look in them. Tryphena observed it.

'How stupid of Mrs. Filkins to talk as though you didn't mind about things!' she exclaimed. 'I know you do really,

Mrs. Vyne, though you don't go howling about, the same as she would.'

'I dare say I'm not so thankful as I should be for the ones that I've still got, Miss,' Elisabeth answered slowly, and without moving. 'A mother did ought to love all her children the same, and mine are good children. Only Milly, she do hardly ever come to see us, and she have often wrote as though I should have given her a better education. But we've always been poor working folk, and I gave her the best I could, though like enough she do feel it a poor 'un now she's living among ladies. Us must seem rough to her when she do come home.'

And Mrs. Vyne bent over the hearth and arranged the sticks on it, perhaps to hide some moisture in her eyes.

'Have Tom and Jacob got grand too?' asked Tryphena.

'I don't know about grand, Miss, they're good boys, and would give me anything I asked for—but there! what a long way off they are! Then Tom's been married this five years and got a little family, and Jacob's going to be married now. It's only natural as they should be thinking mostly about their own affairs. And—well, a mother I know oughtn't to have no favourites, but somehow Jim did seem such a friend to I.'

'I think I remember Jim, Mrs. Vyne. Wasn't he fair like you, with a jolly sort of face?'

A light flickered back into Elisabeth's eyes. She opened a workbox which stood on the window-seat behind the blue check curtain, and took a photograph out of a satin pocket, handling it carefully lest she should soil it.

'That's him, Miss,' she said, passing it to Tryphena. 'He wer drowned six years ago, come the fifteenth of November.'

'I thought no one knew what became of his ship,' returned Tryphena. 'Perhaps he's still alive.'

Elisabeth shook her head gravely, and began rinsing her hands in a basin of water.

'You'd think me silly like, Miss, if I was to tell you how I do know it. He was drowned on the fifteenth of November, about three o'clock in the morning, by our time.'

'O do tell me how you know!' cried Tryphena.

Perhaps Mrs. Vyne felt the need of expansion and sympathy which sometimes comes irresistibly upon even the most reserved women; for after a pause, she continued:

'You see, Miss, Jim he always wer set on going to sea. He did use to say as he'd give it up if his mother forbid him formal:

but seeing the boy so set upon it, Miss, I hadn't the heart to do so—and many's the time I've been sorry for it since. But things do happen as it is God's will they should, and 'tis little use our fancyin' we might ha' set our will against Hisen, and made 'em fall out otherwise.'

Elisabeth rested her hands on each side the rim of the basin and looked straight before her, with absent eyes. 'At first everything did seem to go well,' she went on. 'He was a rare favourite aboard ship, yet as stiddy a chap as you could find. He come back home after every v'yage he made, and brought me presents—well, you've seen 'em in the glass cupboard in the parlour. The last time he come he was as jolly as ever, but just before he went he seem to turn melancholy like, and he said to me quite sudden: "Mother, the old *Castle*"—that was his ship—"she's a floating coffin." I warr'nt my heart came into my mouth. I begged and prayed un not to sail in her. But Jim, he said, "I'd rather go to Old Davey with a good Cap'n like ours than sail in a Liner with many a one. Only mother"—and he spoke it very solemn—"if anything do happen to me, and it's the will of God that I should do so, I'll let you know how 'tis with me. I promise you that." Well, you can fancy, Miss, I was put about. I didn't say much to Father or anyone, but I kept promising myself that if Jim came back safe that time, he should never sail in the *Dover Castle* again. We heard from him from Buenos Ayres saying all was well, and he hoped to spend Christmas with us, and then—O Miss, wasn't it strange, when he'd promised it to me, that he should come to Father and not to me at all?'

The mother's voice complained and her eyes filled with tears.

'Did Mr. Vyne see his ghost?' asked Tryphena with breathless interest.

'I suppose it warn't his fault, poor boy,' continued Elisabeth. 'I do sleep so dreadful sound and never was one for dreams. But Father he do often dream, and that night he screamed so loud in his sleep he woke me up. I asked un whatever was the matter, for he was trembling and all of a sweat, and he told me his dream. He thought he was on something, he didn't rightly know if it wer a rock or what, in the midst of a great heap of water, that was all of a foam and rushing past him like a mill-race. He knew it was night, yet he could see. And he saw the water bringing sommat along at a great rate, and when it came near he saw Jim's face looking up at him out of water, with a

scared sort of look. Then Father ran and ran along by the side of the water, trying to catch hold of un, but he couldn't do it. And the poor chap says to him: "It's no use, Father—I'm a dead man. Give my love to Mother." Then Father saw his face getting quite peaceful like, but the water that wer rushing along all the time carr'd un right away, and Father couldn't see un no more. So he begun to screech and holler and woke me up. When he told me his dream, I knew as well as I do now that I should never see Jim again. No ship ever sighted the *Dover Castle* after she left the Plate River on the tenth of November, but they knowed she must have run into foul weather before she had been a week at sea.'

There was a silence. Then, putting away the photograph in the workbox, Mrs. Vyne repeated wistfully:

'It was strange his coming to Father and not to me, for it was me he promised.'

'It was a strange thing altogether,' said Tryphena, awe-struck. Then lowering her voice still further: 'But it was you that heard the Weeping Lady at the Ferry before poor Bessie died—and so did I. I shall always'—this with satisfaction—'be able to say I've heard a ghost.'

Elisabeth seemed about to answer, then said nothing. Her face changed, as though the gates of her heart, which had been momentarily set wide, had been closed again and locked.

'Do you keep Bessie's photograph in that box too?' asked Tryphena, after some hesitation.

'No, Miss,' Elisabeth answered shortly, 'I don't.' Then she glanced at the clock. 'Why it's gone one! Father'll be wanting his dinner.'

'And I shall be late for lunch again!' screamed Tryphena. 'O, what will papa say? Goodbye, Mrs. Vyne.' She pulled open the door, fled up the steps; and after a brief struggle with the rusty garden-gate, disappeared into the field beyond.

I

Bessie was the youngest and handsomest of Mrs. Vyne's handsome children. She liked dairy-work, and had a cool hand for butter, so her mother had kept her at home. Mr. Filkins, the grocer at Church Milton, rented the Manor and the pastures appertaining to it, and put in his brother-in-law, or rather his brother-in-law's wife, to manage the dairy. He sold the produce

at his shop, to which the gentry for miles round sent for their butter and cheese. So there was plenty for Bessie to do at home; she was content to stay there, and her mother more than content to keep her. Elisabeth Vyne loved her children, especially Jim and Bessie, with the subdued passion of a strong reserved nature which has found no other emotional outlet. Her husband she accepted without complaint, though she was sometimes heard to remark in a cold abstract kind of way, that a woman who could earn a good living for herself, and went and got married, was such a silly that she deserved it. She had been in Squire Meade's service for ten years before she had married his groom, handsome young Thomas Vyne, and for two years after that she had managed their dairy-farm. But Thomas had turned out badly. He drunk and gambled, and finally embezzled his master's money to spend it on a girl in the neighbouring village. After this the Meades had been unable to keep the couple in their service, but they had been faithful friends to Elisabeth during the bad years when her husband had been constantly out of place and she had been encumbered with the bearing and rearing of children. Without their timely aid the youngest child would have been born in the workhouse, and the family possessions irretrievably scattered. When Elisabeth had been set free to work, things had gradually mended. During the ten years they had lived at Old Milton, Thomas had been lazy but not particularly ill-behaved. A perception of the fact that his living depended on his wife, may have had something to do with his comparative reformation.

Mrs. Meade's youngest child was three months older than Elisabeth's. It was a son and heir, the more valued because preceded by five daughters. They called him Geoffrey. Now when Geoffrey was twenty-two, and had spent three pleasant years at Oxford, it happened that he came to Old Milton to expiate their idleness by a Long Vacation of reading with Mr. Dangerfield, the Rector.

It was an event in Elisabeth's monotonous life when her 'little Missus,' as she still called Mrs. Meade, came to the Manor to take rooms there for Geoffrey and his young friend Owen Smith, and to commend 'Master Geoffrey' to the faithful Elisabeth's particular care. There was little or nothing for the young men to do except read. A few phlegmatic fish lie in the deep pool at Weeping Ferry, just above the Manor, and on summer evenings one or two of the good burgesses of Church

Milton may generally be seen standing motionless on the river bank, rod in hand, till the twilight falls. Neither Geoffrey nor his friend cared for this kind of sport. He was not indifferent to the beauties of Nature. He spoke of the mountains in Scotland, where his father sometimes took a shooting, as 'ripping good scenery,' but from Weeping Ferry he wrote home that the river was a fraud and the country hideous. Yet the broad valley, spreading flat between its low boundaries, has a charm and a beauty of its own; the charm of hushed solitude, the beauty of a great expanse of sky, which lends an infinite changefulness of colour to the wide pastures, where the flocks feed, and the river winding through them, to the pale plumage of the willows, and heavy masses of the elms, broken by sharp upspringing spires of poplars. Here and there out of some group of trees a homestead or a church tower pushes roof and wall of grey stone, pearl-grey as the light clouds on the distant horizon. Yet despite these hints of human life, all is profoundly still, profoundly solitary. The cattle may stand all day in the water looking at their own reflections, undisturbed by a passing boat. By July the river is overgrown with the great woody stalks and white umbels of water parsley, and fringed with floating beds of forget-me-nots, rosy thickets of loose-strife and ranks of tall spear-headed reeds.

It was at this season that Geoffrey Meade first saw it, and pronounced it 'a fraud.' Yet he and his friend canoed upon it, and for the rest, read, bicycled, attended occasional tennis parties, and took the dulness of the world good-humouredly.

When Mrs. Meade visited Old Milton it was not only to see the Rector; it was also to see his daughters. She and the Squire had no desire to see their treasured son and heir engaged at twenty-two to some penniless girl from a country parsonage. Her inspection of the three elder Miss Dangerfields was reassuring; and Tryphena was too young to count. The three girls were not only plain, but to a stranger indistinguishable from each other; though each in her secret soul was conscious of some personal point in which she had much the advantage of her sisters. Moreover they were dull and well satisfied with themselves because they were Dangerfields and near cousins of the present Lord Riversham. It was therefore with a mind quite free from matrimonial anxieties on her son's behalf, that Mrs. Meade engaged rooms at Weeping Ferry. She did not happen to see Bessie Vyne, nor would it have troubled her to

know that the girl was handsome. For though Geoffrey gave himself up to the enjoyment of living more than his teachers could approve, his enjoyment was of the healthy out-door sort, and no one could be less inclined to dally with maidens of low degree. So he and Owen Smith came to the Manor. They were on excellent terms with the Vynes, and doubtless admired Bessie; but their admiration was not enthusiastic, and she was a sensible and also a proud girl, without any desire to attract their attention.

So for a month or more all went on smoothly and monotonously at the Manor. Then on the same day in August both Owen Smith and Mrs. Vyne found themselves obliged to go away: he to his own home and she to a bed in Riversham Hospital.

II

That morning old Catharine was hoeing her patch of garden. Her little knotty hands and thin arms, where the veins showed black through the withered skin, had far more strength left in them than could have been supposed. But she hoed slowly and often stopped to blink her colourless eyes in the sunshine, which fell with a pleasant warmth on the damp little garden, surrounded by willows, and glittered on the mingled silver and yellow of her hair.

Old Catharine lived in the grey, tower-like Round House at Weeping Ferry. One tall poplar whispers above it, and about it the distorted willows lean this way and that. She had once a son who was lock-keeper there, but about the time of his death, a railway-company bought up the canal which joins the river at this point, in order to destroy its traffic, and the lock is almost disused. The water trickles through the chinks in the gates, and great burdocks press against them a luxuriance of broad green leaves and massive spikes of pinkish purple blossoms. Yet the gates are solid enough to serve as a foot-bridge over the canal to the meadows and the Vynes' house. The name of Weeping Ferry is very old; older than the tall spire of Church Milton, which has looked far and wide over the valley for five hundred years. Only conjecture finds in it a record of

forgotten far-off things,
And fights fought long ago.

The Ferry is haunted, and on winter evenings the villagers prefer to pass it in twos and threes on their way home from

market, along the raised causeway which runs straight across the water-meadows from the town. The river here divides into two branches. The main one curves away to the right, in the direction of the town; across the other a punt runs on a double rope, connecting the causeway with the tow-path of the canal. It is not only on account of the ghost that the villagers call Weeping Ferry 'an unked place.' Few persons in Old Milton would have confessed to a fear of being 'overlooked;' nevertheless it was sometimes said and oftener hinted that folks Old Catharine took against did not prosper. She was sixty and already nearly stone deaf when she came to Weeping Ferry. People said that thirty years earlier Catharine in fine clothes and yellow ringlets had been seen driving about the country in the bad Squire Tanfield's landau. But it was not this dim and doubtful memory that placed a barrier between her and her neighbours. Chiefly no doubt it was her affliction, her difficulty in apprehending them, still more her own harsh confused unmodulated speech, which seemed to have lost its human tone. Besides this, something solitary, cynical and domineering in her temper contributed to give her a sinister reputation. Elisabeth Vyne was her only friend. Elisabeth had once saved her life by nursing her through a severe illness. After this Catharine used to come to the Manor once a week to sew and do odd jobs, for which she would never receive payment in money, though she received it in other ways. She had a jealous love for Elisabeth which she did not extend to her children, least of all to Bessie, her favourite daughter.

Old Catharine's eyes were as good as her hearing was defective, and as she leaned on her hoe and looked along the causeway, she saw Elisabeth coming a long way off. She wondered what had taken Mrs. Vyne to town when it was not a market day. Elisabeth pulled herself across the ferry wearily, and then turned aside to speak to Catharine in her garden. This she not unusually did, but to-day she had something special to say. Catharine understood her and she Catharine better than anyone else.

Catharine paused in her hoeing and followed with her eyes the movement of Elisabeth's lips.

'You remember the accident I had with the milk pails a while ago?' asked Elisabeth, after the first greetings.

Catharine nodded.

'Well, doctor he do say I must go into hospital at onest—into hospital.'

Catharine shook her head.

'You—stop—at—'ome,' she croaked.

'Doctor says, no—hospital,' shouted Elisabeth.

The pinched white nostrills of the old woman's delicate little nose became still more pinched with scorn.

'Doctors! Ay, doctors have got to get their living the same as other folks, but if I was you I'd leave 'em to terr'fy the gentry.'

'If it was only Dr. Bates I wouldn't take so much notice,' returned Elisabeth, answering the expression rather than the words, only a few of which she could distinguish. 'It ain't one day in ten he's sober. But it was Dr. Thompson, and everyone do seem to put faith in he.'

Catharine was leaning her chin on the top of her hoe. She lifted it just enough to give her jaws full play, and repeated with hoarse distinctness:

'You—stop—at—'ome.'

'And what would become of us all if I was to lose my 'calth and strength?' asked Elisabeth. 'Listen, Catharine. I want you to go to the Manor every day while I'm away, to help Bessie. Aunt Filkins will be there, but she makes more work nor she does. Aunt Filkins and one young gentleman and Bessie. Do you understand?'

Catharine laughed a suppressed internal laugh that was not pleasant to hear. She put her face up as close as she could to Elisabeth's, and a lifted forefinger besides, to emphasise what she had to say. Then she poured out jumbled sounds quickly in a low hoarse voice, making a kind of fog of utterance, from which only a few words emerged, harsh and toneless.

'Bessie—pretty girl—gentleman. I know gentlemen—don't you trust—gentlemen send girls to th' devil—to th' devil. I know gentlemen.'

Elisabeth listened at first in mere bewilderment. Then she understood, and burst into indignant asseverations of Bessie's steadiness, and Mr. Geoffrey's unimpeachable conduct; which indeed might be expected of him, seeing he was own son to Squire Meade and her old Missus. The old woman watched Elisabeth, scraping her chin on the top of the hoe. While she listened thus, after her manner, a smile of the profoundest cynicism just lifted her withered lips and glittered in the recesses of her pale-coloured eyes.

'I—know—gentlemen,' she croaked again.

'What a cure you be, Catharine, to be sure!' exclaimed

Elisabeth impatiently ; and added to herself as she turned to go : 'I declare she do get quite childish. It's no use to try and explain anything to her.'

Mrs. Vyne continued her homeward way. When she had crossed the lock she looked back, and saw Catharine make a gesture to arrest her. The old woman threw down the hoe on which she had been leaning, and ran across the garden with a swiftness extraordinary in one of her age. With the same weird agility she mounted on to the narrow gangway behind the lock gates, and stood there smiling down at Elisabeth, her wild streamers of hair burning orange in the sun against a cool breadth of shadow on a willow behind her.

'All right, Mrs. Vyne,' she said with laboured distinctness, pointing a skinny finger towards the Manor. 'You leave 'er to me—leave 'er to me.'

III

Tryphena was walking along the top of the Manor garden wall. It was not a very high wall, but there was always a chance of falling into a muddy ditch outside it, and this together with the fact that sometimes, as to-day, she had a basket of eggs to carry, made the thing just worth doing. She walked along it deliberately, and after her with equal solemnity, marched Geoffrey Meade. He kept his hands in his pockets and tried to look as though it were exactly the same thing to him as walking on the path, though a perceptible sidelong sway of his body betrayed that it was not. When Tryphena came to the gate she got down, but he stepped on to the pier which had lost its ball, and sat there swinging his legs. Thence he contemplated her with an expression as dismal as Nature permitted him to assume ; for he had a rosy face, a full, smiling mouth and a cheery blue eye.

'Tryphena, old girl,' he said, sighing noisily, 'you've no idea how beastly slow this place is.'

'Come up to our house and play tennis,' suggested Tryphena. Geoffrey looked blank.

'I don't think I can do that,' he replied with some hesitation. 'You see I've got—I'm reading so awfully hard.'

Tryphena looked him through and through.

'O what a lie !' she said.

He was lighting a cigarette.

'Suppose you stop and talk to me here,' he suggested, when it was alight.

'No; mama told me to come home,' returned Tryphena, who was a good girl, in spite of some appearances to the contrary. Then assuming that mature air, which alternated so oddly with the harum-scarum in her deportment: 'I can't think why you don't talk to the Vynes more. Now I find them so very pleasant.'

'Which?' asked Geoffrey. 'Old Vyne?'

'Well, I don't know why people are so disagreeable about Mr. Vyne. He's not half bad when you get to know him. He could tell you a lot you don't know—about horses and things.'

'Could he, by Jove?' And Geoffrey grinned a little; for, like many young men, he liked to consider the horse his 'strong subject.'

'Mrs. Vyne's much nicer, of course,' continued Tryphena. 'But then she's not at home. But there's Bessie. Mama says she's an awfully superior girl. She used to be at our house a lot, and mama taught her singing and things, but papa didn't like it. He said it was putting her above her station.'

'O well—of course there's no use in doing that,' returned Geoffrey, whose own views on social subjects were conservative. Yet he looked with more interest than before at Bessie, as she came round the corner of the house, with some eggs in her apron. Mrs. Filkins was behind her.

'Hi, Bessie! Chuck us the eggs,' screamed Tryphena.

Bessie came up the steps smiling, and put the warm brown eggs into her basket. Tryphena scudded away over the field, swinging it as she went; being filled with much faith in the miscellaneous powers of Providence to watch over eggs, children and drunken men.

'Tryphena's been telling me you sing, Bessie,' said Geoffrey.

'Yes, she's got a nice voice,' returned Mrs. Filkins. 'We're all musical in our fam'ly, but Bessie 'ave 'ad the most advantages, because Mrs. Dangerfield taught her music.'

'It was on mother's account,' explained Bessie; 'because my sister Milly did keep on her so about sending me away to be educated. As if poor people like us could afford to do that.'

'Education's rot,' observed Geoffrey. 'There's a lot too much of it nowadays.'

'O, I never could abide my book!' cried Mrs. Filkins. 'I'm all for music. Do you sing, Mr. Meade?'

'A little, I'm awfully fond of it.'

'Well, I 'ope you'll honour us with a song sometimes. Bessie and I sing a deal when we're together.'

IV

That evening Geoffrey sat forlornly in the large square parlour at the Manor. Although it was August, the weather was damp, and the mist lay white and chill on the low meadows by the river. The oil lamp threw a strong light on the open volume before him and left the room in shadow about him. His pipe was in his mouth, and his eyes mechanically followed the almost imperceptible smoke ascending from the chimney of the lamp to the low white-washed ceiling, where it spread a blackness in the space between two heavy beams. Without all was not precisely dark, but dreary and formless, and now and then the ivy scraped on the pane of the uncurtained lattice. The sound of clattering plates and opening doors had ceased in the kitchen across the way. Mrs. Vyne had been accustomed to keep the kitchen conscientiously quiet of an evening, as she imagined the young gentlemen would greatly dislike anything which disturbed their studies. But now there arose a pleasant sound of voices. Mrs. Filkins and Bessie were singing. The aunt and niece had both a good ear for music, and good voices which harmonised well.

Geoffrey listened.

'By Jove! That's not half bad,' he said to himself.

Presently he put his head in at the kitchen door, rather shyly.

'Do you mind my coming in, Mrs. Filkins?' he asked.

Mrs. Filkins soon dissipated his shyness. She was genial as an acquaintance, though she had drawbacks as a relation. The kitchen was much more cheerful than the parlour. The well-scoured white table was drawn up near the hearth, the plain glass lamp burned brightly on it, Mrs. Filkins sat on one side in a high-backed wooden arm-chair with a cushion, and on the other Bessie's dark head was bent over her mending. A black kitten with a red ribbon round its neck sprawled before the fire, clawing the matting with a rasping noise or making a startling dash at some careless foot, swung in time to a tune. From either end of the high, narrow chimney-piece, set with a row of cheap fairings, two large white china dogs, brown-eared and circular-eyed, stared over the heads of the party, with an eternally smiling serenity worthy of Egyptian sphinxes. The dresser, where some old pewter plates and dishes showed bright

among common blue ware, even the brown hams hanging from the ceiling, seemed to add to the homely comfort of the room. Geoffrey was soon at home there. He knew an immense number of songs, some broadly comic, some of the characteristically English sort, half-humorous, half-sentimental, some patriotic, and a very few wholly sentimental. The two women, whose own *répertoire* was entirely sentimental and religious, caught up the tunes and joined heartily in the choruses. Sometimes Thomas Vyne, smoking silently in the black chimney corner, would take his pipe out of his mouth and swell the sound with a few bass notes.

So the time passed cheerfully enough; and the next evening and the next, and many more in the same way. But sometimes they adjourned to the parlour, where Bessie played dance-music on a crazy piano, while Mr. Vyne took advantage of his wife's absence to spend his evening at the 'Seven Stars,' whence he returned in the sodden condition that was his Nirvana.

V

When his wife was at home, Thomas Vyne did his half of the churning, for a large modern churn is a heavy machine for a woman to work. But as soon as his daughter was left alone, his share dropped to a quarter. At last he gave it up altogether. For slouching along one day from the back of the house to the front, by the narrow gravel path which ran round it, he happened to look in at the long low casement of the kitchen. Bessie was not churning. She had her sleeves tucked up, and was leaning with one strong white arm on the churn, turning a pretty laughing profile away from the window towards the handle. And bent almost double over the handle working with both hands, was Mr. Geoffrey; but as he bent he also lifted towards her a rosy boyish face as laughing as her own. Thomas Vyne retreated from the window to the corner of the house and stood there thinking. His eyelids drooped over his eyes, that were dark like Bessie's, but prominent and dull, and he smiled a slow smile of satisfaction, and also of contemptuous wonder at the folly of a man who could exert himself when he was not obliged. He had been young and handsome once, and the women had been fond of him, but he had never done their work for them; on the contrary, they had worked for him. He went to the stack-yard, and selecting a place where some of last year's hay lay

tumbled in the shadow of a tall new rick, he lay down flat on his back, with his corduroy-trousered legs apart, his hands clasped under his head, and his shapeless hat tilted over his eyes. Nothing of his face remained visible except the grizzled unshaven chin and the loose-lipped mouth, on which an expression of satisfaction lingered even in his sleep; for his visions were literally golden.

Churning was not the only dairy-work for which Geoffrey developed a taste. At this time of year it was Mrs. Vyne's custom to put a cheese into the press every morning before half-past nine, and Bessie would not have thought of breaking the rule in her absence. Geoffrey discovered it was rather good sport breaking the great smooth curd in the vat with a kind of wooden rake, and hunting the pieces about till they were reduced to the smallest possible fragments. Besides it got him up in the morning, so that he arrived at his tutor's with a comparative punctuality, which at first quite took that worthy man aback.

Once he even helped with the washing. It was a hot day, and Bessie went up to the bowling-green with a basket of wet linen under her arm. The bowling-green was a terrace at the upper end of the garden, surrounded by a yew hedge, and led up to by grass steps. The young men had made a tennis lawn of it when Owen Smith was at the Manor. Bessie walked slowly up the turf path, between the gay ranks of rose-coloured and white phloxes, and the sweet grey lavender bushes, full of bloom. She was tired, and glad to breathe the fresh air, after the steamy atmosphere of the wash-house. When she came to the round arch in the hedge of the bowling-green, she paused in surprise; for Geoffrey was lying on the grass in his shabbiest flannels, smoking and reading the newspaper.

'Why, Mr. Geoffrey!' she exclaimed, 'I thought you was going to a garden party this afternoon.'

'So I was,' replied Geoffrey gravely, sitting up and taking the pipe out of his mouth. 'But I've been taken suddenly and seriously unwell.'

'Oh dear!' cried Bessie, opening concerned eyes. 'Would you like the doctor sent for?'

Geoffrey burst out laughing.

'Observe my symptoms,' he said.

He ran and jumped over the tennis net, then hopped back.

Bessie laughed too, but coloured, a little mortified at her own simplicity.

'What a lot of nonsense you do talk, to be sure, Mr. Geoffrey.'

'Of course I try to humbug people, but I don't succeed, except with you. You're so precious—well—green.'

Bessie smiled and said nothing, for fear she should again say something wrong. There is nothing which differs so much from country to country, and from class to class, as pleasantry, and she was instinctively afraid of indulging in it with Geoffrey. She spread the linen on the broad yew hedge, which had been cut low on the further side of the green.

'Why don't you like going to tennis parties?' she asked.

He jumped up and seized the other end of a sheet which she was trying to shake out.

'Because I prefer hanging out the clothes.'

'I shouldn't, if I was you. I'd a deal sooner play tennis.'

'Depends who you play with. The girls about here seem uncommon dull.'

The sheet was spread out between them and went on to the hedge with a heave.

'If you find the ladies about here dull, you must find me a lot worse,' said Bessie, after a pause.

'O, come, I say, Bessie! Who's talking nonsense now?'

She untwisted a towel and flapped it noisily.

'Well, I've never been to London or anywhere, and I've not learnt things like ladies. I don't know as I thought much of Milly's talk about education when I was younger, but I often wish now I wasn't so hignorant.'

Geoffrey leaned his back against the hedge and put his hands in his trouser pockets.

'Now, my good girl, don't go on talking that sort of rot! Who, in the name of wonder, cares whether you're ignorant or not? Of course it's all right for ladies to go to school, but afterwards do you suppose anyone cares two straws what they've learnt? It's an awful mistake educating girls as people do now. Men don't like it. They don't marry them. What a man likes is——'

So far Geoffrey's discourse had been abstract, the education of women being a favourite subject for animadversion in the Meade family. But Bessie was standing opposite him, drinking in his words, and he broke off.

'Why, Lor' bless me, Bessie,' he exclaimed with a short laugh, 'it's perfectly ridiculous your talking about education and that, when—well, I suppose it's like my imperence to tell

you so—but still you must know you're fifty times better looking than any other girl in this blooming country, lady or not.'

The admiration in his look was frank and warm. Bessie turned away slowly and spread a towel on the hedge. His eyes dwelt on the glossy blackness of her plaits and the curves of her creamy cheek and throat. He had never before fully realised her beauty. Neither had she.

VI

The relations of Geoffrey Meade and Bessie continued for a week or two only such as a clear-sighted observer might have called, according to his temper, those of flirtation or of comradeship.

It was at any rate a gossamer idyll, such as the least wind of chance might have blown away; to leave no trace on the heart of one at least of the couple. Yet they somewhat modified each other's ideas. Geoffrey, comparing the ungraceful and ungracious scions of the aristocracy at the Rectory, with Bessie Vyne, felt his faith in gentle birth waver. Bessie, by nature a Radical, though controlled by her mother's conservatism, began to doubt whether her mother and Milly knew so much about ladies and gentlemen as she had been used to believe they did. And all the while old Catharine, washing up dishes in the scullery or moving about, duster in hand, kept a pale, suspicious eye on the young people, while they exchanged laughter and talk that to her was silence. She came to envy Bessie with an envy that was almost hate, for her beauty, for the young gentleman's admiration of it, and the chances it would give her. She, deaf old Catharine, had had rich gentlemen after her once; she had had chances too. She reckoned them up in her long broodings, and magnified them, all the splendid chances she had thrown away in her devil-may-care youth, to come at last to this.

When Elisabeth had been gone three weeks, Catharine was left alone to superintend the young people, for Mrs. Filkins went away.

She had begun to suspect that Mr. Filkins and the niece left in charge of him, were getting along altogether too comfortably without her. Therefore she said that everything was going to sixes and sevens in consequence of her absence, and that Filkins in particular was so much affected by it that he looked as though

he were going to have a stroke; which indeed, at his age, as she had often told him, he might confidently expect, and she shouldn't think it right not to be there. So she went back to Church Milton.

The first evening Geoffrey and Bessie were left alone in the house—for Catharine had gone home and Thomas to the 'Seven Stars'—Geoffrey determined to devote himself to his books. He worked conscientiously for more than half an hour. Then, while his bodily eye travelled over the printed page, his mind's eye saw nothing but Bessie sewing alone in the kitchen. At last, when he had read ten pages without having the slightest idea what they were about, he remarked to himself that 'Confound it all, it was too absurd!'—If there was no one in the house, so much the better. There would be no one to put a disagreeable complexion on a perfectly innocent friendship.

Yet when he came to the kitchen door he knocked at it hesitatingly, and when Bessie said, 'Come in,' he only put his head in.

'Are you awfully busy? Please say if I'm a nuisance, but I've picked out that song I couldn't remember, on the piano, and I thought p'raps you'd like to hear it.'

At first Bessie seemed as though she did not want him, but when he began to beat a retreat, she called him back. He took Mrs. Filkins' deserted chair, and they behaved exactly as they had done when she was there, except that they sung less and talked more. There was nothing particular in their talk, but it took a colour of intimacy from its circumstances, as they sat on each side the hearth. In this way they spent several pleasant evenings.

There were short blue and white cotton curtains to the kitchen window, which Bessie always carefully drew as soon as it was dusk. One night there was a strong wind; a wind that beat the heavy-headed trees this way and that, shattering their twigs and sending a host of prematurely fallen leaves scurrying over the meadows and along the white country roads. The earth beneath seemed full of the tumultuous motion of things and their shadows, but in the sky above the moon rode serenely, watched by a far-off circle of palely twinkling stars.

When Geoffrey came in he flung back a curtain with a sharp jingle of rings.

'What a jolly moon! Come and look at it.'

'O don't!' cried Bessie simultaneously.

‘Don’t what?’

She stepped quickly to the window, pretended to look out and put the curtain back in its place.

‘I can’t abide the moon nor the dark neither,’ she said, going back to her chair and taking up her sewing.

She denied that she was either timid or fanciful about anything else, but she’d had that fancy from a child. She couldn’t help being afraid at night that if she looked up from her work and the curtain wasn’t drawn, she might see—see something peering in at her out of the darkness. It was silly of course, and Mother scolded her for it, but she couldn’t help it. Did Geoffrey know about the Weeping Lady?—No, Geoffrey had never heard of her. Well, of course it was all nonsense about ghosts, but they did say there was once a young lady living at the Manor—that was in the Bampton’s time—and she had a lover. And news came that her lover was false to her, and she ran straight out and drowned herself in a deep pool in the river, just where the canal came in now. Mother didn’t like them to talk about such stuff, but the story went that the lady’s ghost walked by the river there.

There were people in Old Milton and Church Milton too, who declared they’d not been able to get their dogs past Weeping Ferry at night; the poor beasts trembled and whined so pitiful. And sometimes it was said the lady walked across the Long Meadows to the Manor, sighing and wailing all the way and with the wet dripping from her clothes as she went, and she never came into the house, but walked round and round it on the little flagged path, and looked in at the windows as she passed, as though, poor soul, she were seeking to be let in. Mother didn’t believe a word of it, and went out by herself at all hours, when the cows wanted seeing to. But Father declared that once he—— Here Bessie broke off with a sharp little cry, and jumped up so precipitately that she scattered her work things all over the floor. She caught Geoffrey by the shoulder, staring at the door, which opened into the porch.

‘Look!’ she whispered, pointing; and had to swallow something in her throat before she could articulate again, ‘Look!’ Geoffrey turned his head hurriedly. A hole some five or six inches square had been cut out of the door and a pane of glass let in. This aperture, which had been dark, was now filled by something white; a whiteness as of a pallid human face pressed against the glass, and broken by two shadowy pits

for eyes. For a minute or more the two young people remained pressed together, fixed in a horrified stare at the white thing; which seemed to be looking at them. Then the aperture was dark again.

They neither of them spoke, but Geoffrey walked to the door, opened it, and stepped out into the blackness of the porch. Outside in the moonlight, slowly mounting the steps, he saw the figure of a woman; a little old woman with a grey knitted shawl tied over her head and shoulders, and a thin cotton skirt and apron, which the wind blew wildly about her. Geoffrey called after her, but she went on mounting the steps at the same slow pace. At the top of them she paused. She had got out of the shelter of the house and a gust of wind caught her and almost whirled her round.

Bessie had stepped out into the porch and stood behind Geoffrey.

'Why, if it ain't old Catharine!' she cried. And her terror turned to irritation, violent with the reaction of her shaken nerves. She bounded half-way up the steps and caught Catharine by the skirt. The old woman turned with a harsh cry of fear and anger, and tried to pull away her dress. Bessie held it fast. The wind wrapped her own black dress about her, and blew her black hair from her forehead in fantastic little streamers.

'Catharine!' she shrieked. 'How dare you come crouching and spying about the place at this time o' night? What do you mean by——' She ended with an 'Oh!' clapping her hand to her mouth. Catharine had dashed five yellow talons up the length of it, and the blood spurted. Bessie dropped down the steps she had mounted, nursing her bleeding hand. Old Catharine turned her head this way and that, as though hesitating whether to go or stay; then went slowly towards the gate.

Bessie, taking her hand from her mouth, broke into an hysterical laugh.

'O dear, O dear! I really did take her for a ghost!' Geoffrey laughed too, embarrassed.

Catharine, not yet half-way to the gate, glanced quickly round. Bessie's laugh had pierced her dull ears, and her keen eyes caught them both still laughing in the moonlight. In a moment she was back again at the top of the steps. Her hands clutched her skirt in a convulsion of rage, and she stooped to bring her face nearer to them.

'Ha, ha! He, he!' she shrieked, mocking their laughter, with chin thrust out and crooked mouth, gaping mere blackness in the moonlight. For a minute she cried out shrilly, with a sound hardly more human than the whine of the wind round the corner of the house. Then her voice fell and distinct words came.

'Laugh—laugh at old Catharine, did you? I'll see you laugh wrong side your mouth, Bessie Vyne. I watched you—I'll tell—you and gentleman. He won't marry you—not he. I know gentlemen. Send you to the devil, and serve you right. He'll send you to the devil, you——'

Geoffrey, who had stood for a moment as though petrified, was now close to her. He placed his hands on her shoulders and endeavoured to turn her round in the direction of the gate. For a few moments she attempted to resist, pouring out half-articulate curses. Then twisting away from under his hand, she ran along the paved path, through the gate and away round the corner of the garden, with the lightness of a withered leaf before the wind. Geoffrey walked to the gate, which he shut, and stood looking after her, cursing also, between his teeth. When he turned round, Bessie was gone. The moonlight was stealing along the front of the old house, silvering its roof and slanting black shadows across it from the least projection of its stonework. The tall sunflowers in the garden tossed and bowed before the gale till they almost swept the ground, clapping their broad leaves together with a cheerless sound. From time to time the branch of an elm outside answered them with a groan. Geoffrey stood there in the wind, miserable with the acute and helpless misery of youth, placed suddenly in an awkward situation. He felt that he ought to go indoors and say something to Bessie, but he could not for the life of him think of the right thing to say. In a few minutes he gave up trying to think and walked into the kitchen, trusting to fate. To his relief Bessie was not there. He went through into the passage. A small table stood there with a shiny cloth on it, a petroleum lamp, and beside that his bedroom candle and matches, placed ready for him. The old staircase of the Manor had been burnt down years ago, and the lamp lighted a narrow white deal stair, very clean and very steep. It looked cheerless, and so did the parlour, where the lamp had smouldered low and smelt vilely. Geoffrey lit his candle and went slowly upstairs to his bedroom. That too was clean and bare, yet smelt fusty with the fustiness of generations of feather-

beds.' The low four-post bed had very white dainty curtains and a patchwork coverlid which Elisabeth and Bessie had made together when Bessie was still a little girl. Geoffrey sat down on the edge of it. The single candle flickered in the draught and sent a large unflattering silhouette of his profile wavering about the whitewashed wall, sometimes invading, sometimes receding from a text illuminated by Tryphena, with a prodigal expenditure of shell-gold and ultramarine. In a few minutes he felt a flash of indignant contempt for himself. So he rose and stumped resolutely down the creaking stairs and knocked at the kitchen door. Bessie was sitting by the table, and as he came in he saw her snatch up her sewing, which was lying at a little distance from her. He came in slowly and stood in front of the hearth, with one heel on the fender. Bessie's dark head was bent over her work, but he saw her handkerchief lying beside her in a little wet ball, and thought he saw a moist gleam about her silken eyelashes. He was immediately pierced to the heart by an acute consciousness of guilt and an equally acute desire to console.

'I just came in to say good-night,' he said humbly.

Bessie was furious with herself for not being able to answer, but she had given way to her tears, imagining Geoffrey to be safe upstairs, and could not immediately check them. Geoffrey turned one of the large china dogs a little, carefully, as though its lifted nose and round O's of eyes had not been pointed at precisely the right spot on the opposite wall. Then he glanced down again and saw a bright drop just falling on Bessie's work. In a moment he was on his knees by the table, leaning his arm on it.

'Please don't cry, Bessie,' he said, 'I can't tell you how sorry I am—I'm afraid it's upset you most awfully.'

Bessie murmured something husky about it being perfectly horrid, but not his fault.

'O yes it is! I ought to have prevented it. I ought to have kicked the old dev—wretch out before she could get up her steam. I'm sure it's my fault somehow. I can feel it is.'

'O no, no! It's not a bit. And anyhow she'd seen.'

'But there wasn't anything to see, my dear girl.'

'No, but she'll say—O dear!' And Bessie put her arm on the back of her chair and laid her forehead on it.

'Never mind what she says——' Geoffrey was unconsciously edging nearer to Bessie as he talked—'For one thing, not a soul can understand her jabber, except your mother.'

'But she'll say to her—and O, Mother will be so vexed!'

There was a pause.

'I suppose I oughtn't to have come into the kitchen,' he said ruefully. 'I knew it was my fault somehow.'

'No, no!' cried Bessie. 'It was most kind of you, I'm sure. I should have been dreadful dull of an evening all by myself. And—and there wasn't any harm.'

She blushed faintly and turned away, twisting her wet handkerchief round her fingers.

'Will your mother scold you, Bessie?' he asked.

'I don't know about scold; she don't say much, but I can't bear Mother to be vexed with me. I'm quite childish, as you may say, about it.'

'But she can't be vexed: at least not with you,' said he, with cheerful conviction.

'O yes, she will. Mother's awful good and kind, but she's so very—well, I don't know—so very—'

She twisted herself still more round from him, and dabbed the wet handkerchief hastily on her eyes. This fresh outbreak of tears was more than Geoffrey could stand. Before he quite knew what he was doing his arm was round her waist and a little kiss fell haphazard just between her cheek and throat.

'Poor little Bessie! Don't cry,' he said softly in her ear. At the touch of his hand and lips Bessie seemed to herself to start; but it was only a start of the blood, not outwardly perceptible. The tears dried up in her eyes as though by magic, her breath came pantingly, and she drew a little towards him instinctively, her thoughts at an entire pause. He kissed her again, this time on her chin, just below the corner of her mouth.

'Come, cheer up, old girl,' he said. But it did not matter to himself or to her precisely what he said. It was an utterance of caress and comfort independent of words.

The back door opened with a clattering noise.

It was Thomas Vyne, returning from the 'Seven Stars' and stumbling over a row of milk-pails put ready for the morning's use.

Geoffrey rose hastily from his knees.

'I suppose I'd better be off,' he said. 'Good-night, Bessie. Now mind, you're not to cry any more.'

He went upstairs, and fancied that Thomas, somewhere in the background among the milk-pails, did not observe him. But Thomas, closing the kitchen door behind him with a meaning grin, said to his daughter:

'Ullo, Bessie! Gettin' a sweet'eat?'

'No, Father. Please don't talk nonsense.'

'Nonsense, is it? I've seen a bit more of the world nor you have, or our mother either, for the matter o' that, and I say Geof Meade's gettin' uncommon sweet on you. Well, I've known queerer things to 'appen than for a good-lookin' girl like you to get married by a gentleman.'

'Don't, Father! I'm sure I never thought of anything of the kind.'

'Ha, ha! 'Aven't yer now? But 'ave it yer own way, Bessie. I ain't a-going to spile sport. But remember this, my gurl'—and he wagged his head solemnly—'the Vynes 'ave seen better days, as well you know. Yer poor old father come down in the world and married a labourer's daughter—all his own fault, my dear, his own fault!—but it 'ud be a great comfort to 'im in his old age to see his gurl a-ridin' in her kerridge.'

He was in a sentimental stage, and went to bed feeling a good father.

Bessie had usually but a moderate amount of respect for her father's ideas, but on this occasion they influenced her more than she would have been willing to allow. Instead of jumping into bed quickly, as usual, she undressed slowly, with many pauses, though the wind that roared in the chimney and shook the leaded casements, chilled her bare arms and shoulders. As she sat on the bed with her loosened hair about her, she happened to catch sight of her own reflection in the shabby little looking-glass. She fixed her eyes on it for several minutes with an earnest scrutiny; then flung herself face-foremost on the pillow, in a rapture of she knew not what. Up to the day when Geoffrey had helped her to hang out the clothes, she had been one of those exceedingly rare women who are really unaware of their own beauty, or at any rate of its power. Such unconsciousness is supposed to add a charm, and the appearance of it does so; but the reality blunts the edge of beauty even more than an excessive consciousness.

Geoffrey was also more wakeful than usual. He thought a good deal about Bessie: what a clipper she was, and what a shame of her mother to allow a foul-tongued old hag like the deaf woman to come about the premises. He hoped Bessie wasn't crying herself to sleep; and went to sleep himself, feeling very tender-hearted over her.

There were only five days more before Elisabeth came home

from the hospital. But five days can sometimes work a greater change than as many years. Geoffrey and Bessie were more constantly together than before. Their conversation when alone became disconnected, and when connected somewhat vacuous ; for they were too much absorbed in the fact of each other's presence to care what they were talking about. Yet Geoffrey was not aware that anything important was going on. He was not in the habit of analysing his own feelings, or the remoter results of his conduct. A strong impulse was carrying him along, and conscious that he had no evil intentions, he did not make any effort to resist it. Perhaps he could not have done so if he had tried.

(To be continued.)

Two Months in Sokotra.

IT is certainly strange that so little attention has been paid by travellers, missionaries, or colonists to the island of Sokotra. It lies on the great ocean highway from Aden to all Asiatic and Australian ports, and ought, one would think, from its geographical position to have been utilised long ago as a *depôt* for coal and provisions. The strategic importance of the island is considerable, yet, since its first occupation by the Portuguese in the days of Albuquerque and Tristan d'Acunha, the maritime Powers of Europe have paid scarcely any attention to its claims, and its acquisition by Great Britain is of quite recent date.

The chief object of our expedition was to investigate the remains of the Himyaritic and Christian civilisation which apparently preceded the present Mohammedan *régime*. Marco Polo, Abulfeda, Leo Africanus, Francis Xavier, and a number of other writers, chiefly Arabic, agree in stating that throughout the Middle Ages, and apparently as late as the end of the seventeenth century, there existed in the island a Christian Church, derived from a Persian or Syriac source, and governed by its own bishop. In fact, Theodore tells us that as far back as the earlier half of the fifth century a famous missionary, called Theophilus, came from the island of Diu and preached the gospel in 'India,' whatever that vague term may have meant at the time. The name Diu-Sokotra has been curiously metamorphosed by Greek writers, like Cosmas Indicopleustes and the author of the 'Periplus,' into *Διοσκορίδης*.

From an archæological point of view, however, Sokotra is certainly disappointing. A destructive flood of Wahabee invasion swept over the island in 1803, and destroyed, apparently, almost every vestige of Christianity which remained. Nor did these fanatics spare even the monuments of their own religion. Every-

where we found graves violated and tombstones mutilated, and it seems clear that most, if not all, of the five mosques in the island were destroyed and subsequently rebuilt; at Tamarida the foundations of the older building are plainly visible. Still, it is difficult to account for the almost utter absence of any indication that the island was once the seat of a Christian Church. Here and there we found crosses cut in the rock, and near Ras Momi we came across some bone-caverns, high up in the limestone cliffs, which may have been Christian *κοιμητήρια*. In some places, too, are the foundations of what may possibly have been Cœnobitic monasteries of the Portuguese period, and over an alcove in the rude mosque of Ghalansyah I noticed a Coptic cross deeply cut in the stone. The Mollah could give no account of it beyond saying that it was an Arabic letter, which it certainly was not. The emblem may have survived the wreck of the ancient religion, a solitary and pathetic reminiscence of Christianity in the midst of the enemy's stronghold! Cut off from all external support, the Church of Sokotra fell upon evil days and utterly disappeared; it has lived without a history, and its memorial is perished with it.

The fact that the entire island was at one time Christian is known to some, at any rate, of the natives. One wonders whether the revolution was silently carried out—whether any faithful remnant survived the general cataclysm of Islam. We were greatly disappointed at our inability to visit the Abdul Kerim islands, which lie between Sokotra and Cape Guardafui. Possibly these islets may have served as the Pella of the Sokotran Church, or, again, still earlier records of Christianity might be discovered in them, forming as they do a natural series of stepping-stones from the continent; for certainly the few indications which do exist tend to show that the Sokotran Church derived its origin, not from Syriac or Persian, but from Abyssinian, sources. At Eriosh, on the north coast, there is a large flat piece of limestone covered in every direction by rude inscriptions. Rough pictures of camels abound, and still more numerous are the incised outlines of human feet, generally in pairs; in other parts of the rock one sees drawings of a snake with a large head. Scattered about everywhere amongst these primitive sketches are Himyaritic letters, some of novel shape. These seldom combine sufficiently to form any intelligible inscription; but one thing is certain—that the Greek writing which Riebeck alleges to exist at Eriosh is a myth: all the letters are of Ethiopic origin. *A propos* of these letters, it is interesting to find that almost all the marks used for branding

camels and camel-mats are old Ethiopic letters, or based upon these. I collected about thirty of these camel-marks, which were always described by the drivers as 'old Sokotran' letters. A striking analogy to this usage is furnished by the survival in historical times of the two obsolete Greek letters Koppa and Sampi as marks for branding horses. Again, if the Christianity of Sokotra was originally derived from Abyssinia, it is comparatively easy to account for the entire absence of any remains of Christian architecture, for the round and unsubstantial buildings which would *more Ethiopico* serve as places of worship would speedily disappear when abandoned by their worshippers, or be utilised as ordinary dwelling-places. Lastly, the bone-caverns of Ras Momi find their counterpart at the present day³ in the charnel-houses which are used by Abyssinian Christians.

To the traveller who views Sokotra from the deck of a passing steamer the island presents a picture of bleak and barren hills without a vestige of vegetation; but like many other volcanic islands—St. Helena, for instance—it reveals its inland beauties on closer acquaintance. During one journey from Ghalansyah in the west to Ras Momi in the east, and thence, after a long circuit to the south-west, back to Tamarida, we passed through scenery of the most varied character. In some places along our route we camped on hills where every blade of grass was scorched and withered by the same drought which has made havoc of the Indian crops, and we found it difficult at night to keep our tents upright in face of the terrific blasts of the monsoon which swept over us from the sea. But when we turned towards the south-west the face of the country changed. Instead of arid hills and dried-up river-beds we found ourselves amongst lofty mountains of red granite, thickly covered with trees and bushes, and valleys where numerous villages were dotted along the streams which ran down from Jebel Haghier to the sea. Several of our camps in this part of the island were especially beautiful. Hillside and mountain torrent, palm-tree and tamarind, suddenly lit up by the full moon as it rose above the crags of Jebel Xarieh, the air filled with the mysterious whisperings of a tropical night—pictures like this, once seen, never to be seen again, impress themselves indelibly upon the memory.

The idea of using Sokotra as a sanatorium for Aden has been occasionally entertained. Certainly, as far as climate goes no better selection could be made—that is, if one lived among the hills. The Bedawin villagers and cave-dwellers who inhabit the

uplands can vie with the Athenians of old in the clearness and freshness of the air they breathe—

ἀεὶ διὰ λαμπροῦτον
βαίνοντες ἄβρως αἰθέρος.

On the plains, however, the climate is very relaxing. At Ghalansyah and Tamarida it was difficult to resist the enervating effect of the warm and humid atmosphere, vitiated as it was by the exhalations from several large lagoons. These shallow lakes, fringed by reeds, palms, and mangroves, are sometimes very beautiful, and amid the attractions they present as camping-sites one is apt to forget the danger of the miasma which rises at night from their waters. One of our party had no less than four attacks of fever during two months;¹ and even if we escaped actual fever, we invariably experienced in the proximity of these lagoons a miserable feeling of lassitude and debility.

The cost of living in the island is very little. In fact, anyone wishing for peace and retrenchment might do worse than spend a winter amid the delightful hills and valleys of Sokotra. Lambs can be purchased for 1s. 3d., magnificent lobsters for 2d., excellent sea fish for almost nothing, and, if anyone is prepared to take some trouble and to shoot straight, duck, widgeon, and other wildfowl can be added to the larder.

Apart, however, from wildfowl, Sokotra offers few attractions to the sportsman. On several of the *khors* and lagoons birds are abundant, and at Ghalansyah one can get as much duck-shooting as one wishes if one employs a couple of Arab boys, one to drive the birds up the lagoon, the other to act as water-spaniel and retrieve the dead ones. I also shot curlew, snipe, and quail in various parts of the island, but in no great quantity. Sometimes, too, a covey of sand-grouse came swooping upon our camp as the sun went down. The larger fauna of the Arabian and Somali coasts are entirely absent from the island. It is most disappointing to find no gazelle in surroundings so admirably adapted to their habits. In fact, wild asses, wild goats, and civet cats are the only larger animals to be found in Sokotra. The former roam about the hills to the east of the Tamarida plain in large flocks. They are much disliked by the natives, who assert that these

¹ Since these words were written Mr. Theodore Bent, the companion here spoken of, has died. A subsequent attack of fever in the Yaffi country (South Arabia) was accentuated by a chill caught on the homeward journey, and proved fatal. I little thought when I left my kind and courteous fellow-traveller at Aden on our return from Sokotra that the 'good-bye' was a final one.

playful creatures trample their goats to death out of what the Americans call 'pure cussedness.' These animals are very shy, and they rushed off at breakneck pace when they noticed our approach. I managed, however, to get within ninety yards of one by crawling on all-fours through the bush, and killed it with one of Tolley's 'Ubique' bullets, which entered at the shoulder and came out at the thigh of a hind leg. The natives rushed up, and I could see that some dissatisfaction was mingled with their amazement when they saw that the animal was dead. Their little plan had been that after I had wounded the animal they should capture and tame it, for when fairly young such captives can be ultimately induced to accept the trivial round of a domestic donkey with equanimity. The wild ass had a fine skin, but I could not induce any of the villagers to take it off.

As to the wild goat, I was unable to get a shot at this noble-looking beast. One realises in Sokotra the full force of the statement that 'the high hills are a refuge for the wild goat.' The Bedawin have naturally no idea of the capacity or range of a rifle, and often after a fearful scramble up a steep crag they would point to a wild goat peacefully grazing five hundred yards away, and ask why I did not kill it. The civet cat, unlike good children, is heard but not seen, and I was greatly disappointed at failing to secure a specimen.

There is no fishing to be got in the interior of Sokotra. Professor Bailey Balfour says, in the preface to his work on the botany of Sokotra, that 'the streams are stocked with fish,' but this statement is most misleading. The fine, pebbly streams which run down from the Haghier watershed suggest trout at every turn, but, alas! they contain absolutely nothing except water-beetles, larvæ, and crabs innumerable. Near the coast one does, it is true, find a good many fish in the streams, but these are clearly sea fish which have ascended a little way into fresh water. Some decent sport might, however, be got in the lagoons, where several respectable kinds of fish will rise at a fly or can easily be caught with a small piece of conger-eel for bait.

But if the sportsman's energies are somewhat cramped in Sokotra, the crag-climber will find ample scope for his enthusiasm amidst the numberless pillar-rocks of Jebel Haghier. This magnificent range rises almost perpendicularly from the plain of Tamarida. The lower slopes on the southern side are clothed with a dense vegetation, through which the climber has to force his way, frequently on all-fours, before he reaches the base of the

crags, which rise up in every direction. If any subsequent visitor wishes to ascend Haghier, he will find Ardahan the best place from which to start. From this spot I accompanied two Bedawin through a dense growth of bushes and creeping-plants to the foot of a terrific crag called Jebel Dryet. The Bedawin then declared that the ascent of the peak was impossible, and that a negro had fallen four years ago from one of the ledges, before reaching the summit, and been dashed to pieces. After lunch, however, I informed them that if they did not accompany me to the top there would be no *bakshish*. This dire threat altered their views of the mountain, and we ultimately reached the summit, where I planted a small Union Jack tied to a long pole, the only external sign of our sovereignty which exists in the island! My hands and feet were bleeding and my shoes torn to pieces from the scramble up the rough granite rocks, but one was well rewarded for the trouble by the beauty of the scene spread out before us. Nearly 5,000 feet below lay the village and plain of Tamarida, on our left rose the stupendous crags of Bit Molech, on the east and south an almost endless succession of hills and valleys met the eye, and round the whole lay the broad girdle of the Indian Ocean, with the ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα of its waters glittering in the full sunlight. Far off in the distance a large Messageries steamer was rapidly passing on its way, homeward bound, while its passengers were probably commenting on the dreary and forbidding aspect of an island upon which I was at the moment enjoying a view of grandeur and beauty almost unsurpassable.

The population of the island is made up of several races. On the coast one finds a mongrel blend of Arabs and negroes; amongst the mountains the villagers are Bedawin pure and simple, with chocolate-coloured skins and handsome features. But, taken as a whole, the inhabitants of Sokotra do not impress one favourably. They are extremely greedy, and *robeeah* is a word scarcely ever out of their mouths. The rupee has ousted the old Maria Theresa dollar from this island, as from other Oriental countries, but the islanders are not yet accustomed to the use of the smaller Indian currency, and often looked askance at the two-anna pieces we offered them for milk or butter. Only once during our stay did we meet with any real generosity or hospitality, and that was from an alien, a merchant of Muscat. Woe to the unhappy traveller whose money gave out in Sokotra, or to the still more hapless mariner cast upon these shores without any possessions! The Sultan, it is true, receives £90 a year from the British Government,

and is required by treaty to befriend Englishmen who may be wrecked on this coast; but the abominable treatment we received at the hands of this mean and avaricious ruler would not lead one to expect much in the way of generosity towards poor or penniless outcasts. When we wished to leave the island before the change of the monsoon had cut off all possibility of such a thing, the Sultan prevented any boat from making a bargain with us, in order to force us to employ his own dhow, for the hire of which he demanded the outrageous sum of £120. We ultimately secured the wretched buggalow for £50, an extortionate price; but it is high time the British Government taught this insolent Arab a lesson, and did its duty by taking the island effectually under its control.

Even when the inhabitants were not asking for rupees they were clamouring for medicine. A Beecham's pill or two, coupled with a lively faith in the virtues of *dowa Inglizi*, worked wonders in the case of almost every ailment. I smeared some vaseline on the head of a young man unconscious from sunstroke—about as bad a form of treatment as possible, but his friends did not like cold water; his female relations took turns at rubbing the ointment well in, and in a few hours I met the youth in the full enjoyment of his normal health. Even when the futility of our medicine was obvious, as in the case of lockjaw or total paralysis, we distributed pills, and as we generally left the village next morning we never had any complaints of failure. I had brought with me some of the antitoxin prepared by the Pasteur Institute for hypodermic injection against the venom of snakes, but, unfortunately, I never had a case of snake-bite brought to me. Despite a glowing account of the efficacy of the medicine and offers of large *bakshish*, none of the natives would voluntarily submit to a snake-bite for experimental purposes.

As, however, the islanders are, with all their avarice, thoroughly pusillanimous, the traveller in Sokotra need entertain no fears on the score of danger from attack. The biggest men ran away if one threw a small stone at them, and an Englishman with a double-barrelled gun and fifty shot-cartridges could easily defeat the standing army in a pitched battle and depose the Sultan. On one occasion only our camel-men indulged in a feeble mutiny, but the mere sight of our revolvers was enough to recall them to the path of duty.

Another characteristic of these people is extreme laziness. They will not take the trouble to cultivate the fertile tracts of

land which abound in the interior, nor in the coast towns have they sufficient enterprise to construct anything more than a few dug-outs and surf boats. In fact the only industry of the island of any extent is the preparation of *ghi*, or clarified butter, which is shipped off to Muscat, Makullah, or Zanzibar. A little gum is still collected from that strange freak of Nature, the dragon's-blood tree, which grows abundantly on the uplands, in company with the camhane, or cucumber tree, and the grotesque *Adenium*.

Nevertheless, the commerce of the island must have been considerable in former days. Everywhere the eye is met by signs of a retrograde civilisation. The trade in aloes is now practically non-existent, but we frequently came across long walls, continued often for miles, sometimes even to the summits of precipitous hills, which have served in their day as boundaries of the aloe-fields, and imply a private ownership of land which no longer exists. At Feraigeh also, and elsewhere, we found gigantic breakwaters—one of them being nine feet thick—built up with huge stones, to check the force of the mountain torrents when swollen by the rainfall of the S.W. monsoon. Traces, too, of roads constructed with some degree of skill occur here and there; but the present occupants of the island would never dream of even the most elementary road-making, nor do they possess any of the engineering skill which enabled their forefathers to cover their tombs with vast slabs of roughly cut granite weighing two or three tons.

No commercial enterprise in our own times has ever taken this island in hand, but it seems probable that it might well repay a little attention. There are several harbours on the north with good anchorage; though if the Government ever made serious use of the island the harbour of Tamarida would be all the better for a mole, in addition to the existing bluff, which shields it effectually from the N.E. monsoon. Sokotra might serve very well as a penal settlement, or, again, extensive and well-watered plains like those of Hadibo and Gharriah might produce profitable crops of indigo or cotton. Tea, too, might perhaps be grown on some of the upland plateaux, which are very fertile and enjoy a heavy rainfall. Certainly, successful tea-plantations within twelve days' sail of London would be extremely valuable. The numerous flocks and herds of the island might at any rate supply Aden, within two days by steamer, with beef and mutton; or the harbour of Tamarida, with the improvement mentioned above, might be used as a safe and convenient coaling-station.

But whatever be the future of the island, it is at least clear

that at present it derives no benefit whatever from its incorporation in our Empire. Our control of the island is at present merely nominal. No representative of Great Britain lives on Sokotra; the Sultan, whose 'palace' is surmounted by an Arabic flag, displays the utmost discourtesy to English visitors; and evidently the scanty visits of the Resident from Aden are not adequate to impress sufficiently upon this dependency a sense of its relation to the British Empire. Such visits are made about once in three years, and then only for a few hours. Slavery seems to exist, and there is no missionary work of any kind. Lying, as the island does, in the track of ships to and from our Indian and Australian ports, it would be rendered less of a terror to seamen were a lighthouse built, say, at the eastern extremity, where the cruel reefs of Ras Momi are a fruitful source of disaster to vessels. As a silent witness to the absence of such a provision, there is lying at this moment off this eastern promontory the wreck of a German vessel lost with all hands.¹ A pathetic souvenir of this tragedy was shown me by an Arab, in the shape of a leaf from a schoolboy's notebook covered with arithmetic in childish figures

ERNEST N. BENNETT.

¹ Since this paragraph was written the wreck of the P. & O. steamship *Aden* has taken place in precisely the same spot.

'He Fell among Thieves.'

YE have robbed,' said he, 'ye have slaughtered and made
an end;

Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead:
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?
'Blood for our blood,' they said.

He laughed: 'If one may settle the score for five
I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day:
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive.'
'You shall die at dawn,' said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope;
He climbed alone to the eastward edge of the trees;
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly flows;
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Affghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wisteria trailing in at the window wide;
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the gray little church across the park,
The mounds that hide the loved and honoured dead;
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,
The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between
His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen;
The College Eight and their trainer dining aloof,
The Dons on the dais serene.

He watched the liner's stem ploughing the foam,
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw;
He heard her passengers' voices talking of home,
He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruined camp below the wood:
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet;
His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white;
He turned, and saw the golden circle at last,
Cut by the Eastern height.

'O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore Thee.'

A sword swept.

Over the pass the voices one by one
Faded, and the hill slept.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

The History of My Frocks.

WHEN I look at the short, loose, long-sleeved and high-necked little summer frocks, made of soft silk or cambric, in which the children of to-day disport themselves in Kensington Gardens, and then think of the garments in which I myself was clothed at a similar age, I feel as if I, like Lady Desmond, might have 'danced with Richard III. in his youth,' so wide is the gulf that must be bridged over! If manners make men, clothes to a very large extent make women, and that not only externally but internally also. And this being granted, it is no wonder that the girl at the end of the century differs in so many respects from the girl in the middle.

The very first article of dress that stands out from the blankness of my early years is a tight-fitting apron of slate-gray glacé silk, edged with wavy, narrow, red braid, in which, at the age of three, I had some dancing lessons. What kind of frock this ill-composed garment may have covered I have wholly forgotten, but I believe my sister, who was some years older, had a similar apron. I thought it ugly—I usually did think my clothes ugly—but, unlike most children of decided views, I seldom cared enough about the matter to make a fuss. And why an apron should have been considered an aid to dancing is another anomaly I have never been able to explain, but, at all events, it was in this, 'and not another,' that I learnt my 'positions.'

Contemporaneous with the slate-silk apron was a dark green pelisse trimmed with velvet, which was put on when I was standing on a chair in the nursery. I considered this inoffensive as to colour (it was as nearly black as well could be), but bitterly resented its infantile form, for it was a weakness of mine always, from the very dawn of my history, to consider myself grown-up. I looked with wrath and envy at my sister, who was beyond the age of pelisses, and had her dark green merino cut into a loose tunic, with a silk cord

round the waist ending in tassels, bearing a striking resemblance to the conventional dresses for children in pictures, from Joseph to Prince Arthur of Brittany. What head gear was considered suitable to these frocks I do not recollect, but it must have been about this very time that my godmother gave me her solitary present—a little bonnet of drawn blue satin, with a white cap inside decorated with tiny bows of pink 'baby' ribbon. The donor is still alive, and of the most severe aspect, and when I pass her in the street I never fail to wonder how she came to buy anything so frivolous.

When I did not wear the blue satin bonnet, I had a pink plush one. My objection to this was purely æsthetic; I thought it gaudy and much too light, and I am sure it must have been very unbecoming, for I was a swarthy child, with thick black eyebrows and dark hair, and the delicate colour was most probably very trying to me.

The next stage in my career was the birth of my brother, which happened three days previous to my fourth birthday. He was a most lovely child, and our nurse spent much time in making the little caps which my mother insisted on all the babies wearing, by day as well as by night, and to this wise precaution I always attribute the fact that our ears sit tight to our heads, instead of being at right angles to them, like those of so many modern children. The caps were such as one is familiar with in pictures, from the days of Lady Fanshawe (of ghostly fame) to those of the Duchess of Devonshire, and even of her present Majesty. They had lace-embroidered crowns and thick borders of lace, in which (as in the case of the bonnets) were inserted loops of baby ribbon. I took the deepest interest in these caps and in the colours of the ribbons, but my preference generally went in favour of the white.

It was a great day for us when my little brother was christened. My sister and I had frocks of bright golden brown silk, shot with purple, fastening behind (how I longed for the grown-up glories of a dress that fastened in front!), with full skirts and a trimming of the silk that ran over the shoulders from back to front, and was generally known as 'braces.' Nowadays everyone would stop to stare at two such odd little figures, but I have been always given to understand that then my mother's taste was universally admired and had many imitators. This fact I noticed for myself as I grew older, and it was a very bitter drop in my cup. I was not at all of an acquisitive turn of mind, but the bare idea of being one of a

crowd was invariably hateful to me, and throughout my life the recommendation 'it is what everybody is wearing' has instantly acted as a deterrent. Not long ago, a dressmaker, who was acquainted with this unamiable peculiarity, declined to sell to another customer (and friend of my own) some special sort of lace trimming similar to what I had chosen for my own dress. She was quite sure I should go elsewhere if she was to do such a thing, she said firmly, and she would get something equally pretty for the other lady. And so, as far as I know, that trimming 'reigned alone,' like Montrose's Alexander.

When I was six or seven I put on my first mourning for one of my aunts. I suppose we had the usual merino for morning, but our best frocks were black silk, with large, loose sleeves and double skirts, the upper one edged with a kind of dog-tooth decoration of dull purple velvet. These precious garments were kept strictly for Sundays (luckily we did not grow very fast), and we sat primly in them through the whole unmitigated morning service, ending up with a fifty-minute sermon. Finding that the Litany Sunday after Sunday became monotonous, I adopted the plan of studying the marriage service instead, so that when the moment came for my enacting the principal part I did not need, like one of my cousins, to read it over the night before, as she had never been at a wedding, and did not know what was required of her!

Well, one fine Sunday afternoon one of my elder brothers, who was at home for the holidays, proposed taking my sister and me out for a walk. We were much flattered at this act of condescension, and set out, without anyone thinking it necessary to change our black silks for something more suitable; indeed, such a substitution would probably have been held a desecration of the Sabbath. As we were good walkers we soon left the town and suburbs far behind, and reached the fields, which were then full of primroses and cowslips. A small stream, one of the very few in that waterless region, flowed along on its way to join the larger river, and it suddenly occurred to my brother that he should like to jump it. Though the brook was narrow, this was less easy than it seemed, as the weather had been wet, and for some distance the bank was a mass of mud. I did not, however, wait for him to clear it, but, always anxious to be 'in the first flight,' followed him instantly. As might have been expected, my foot slipped on the muddy bank, and, in trying to recover myself, I staggered

and fell, and when I was hauled up by my brother my best frock was a sight to behold. I was in despair, not so much at the present ruin as at the prospective scolding which was certain to be my lot. Still, it was not agreeable for a self-respecting child, who was as fussy as an ermine over spots on her clothes, to have to run the gauntlet of a crowd of Sunday promenaders come out for an airing, with a muddy breastplate for ornament; and though we sneaked through the most secluded ways, and finally came in by the stables and garden, it was impossible wholly to escape notice. Over the remainder of that day's adventures I prefer to draw a veil!

I was neither an imaginative nor an untruthful child—either quality would have met with scant encouragement in our family—but I well remember about this time giving utterance to one of the most deliberate falsehoods ever framed by man. We had all gone for our usual summer's outing to the nearest watering place, a pleasing combination of sands and mud, where children who loved climbing and hated digging could find nothing to do; and when we were not inhaling iodine on the beach, we spent most of our time at the station, as my little brother was passing through the usual juvenile craze for trains and engines. One day my nurse had taken him into the baker's to buy some delicacies known as 'Chelsea buns' for our tea, and I stood at the shop door and looked out. When we got home I announced to my sisters that while standing at the door I had seen a child pass by dressed from head to foot in white velvet, and carefully described the fashion of its clothes. Great amazement was expressed, but no incredulity, and I remember feeling both triumph at my success and shame at having imposed on such unsuspecting natures. What made me do it I never knew, unless it was the desire to see how far I might go with impunity; but though I kept my own counsel, and never confessed, I did not repeat the experiment.

The illusions of childhood are curious, and die hard. One of mine was that it could not be real summer unless we went out for our walk after tea, and were dressed from head to foot in white. After lessons were done we were turned into the garden, and there swung, played cricket, climbed trees, or read books, as suited our humour, but take a walk in the woods or over the common we would not. What was the good of June or July if you were to do things like that? It might as well be October or March. So when tea was over we changed our socks and petticoats and put

on our frocks of soft, thick white muslin, trimmed with embroidery, with white jackets made of a kind of dimity and known as 'jean,' loose and edged with work, to cover our bare necks and arms. On our heads were big, flappy Leghorn hats adorned with straw-coloured ribbon and white feathers. The tiny patterns of print on a white ground, which were our morning wear, would have been considered wholly out of place in the afternoon. But it is not to be supposed that our fine garments were allowed to interfere with our comfort or entertainment. We were the greatest tomboys living, and never happy unless we were doing something active out of doors. In the morning we set forth with our governess, armed with books, and while she sat on a bank my sister and I looked round for some attractive thorn tree (of which there were thousands on the common) and spent the remainder of our free time on the highest possible branch. I often look at them now and wonder how it was we ever came down with a whole frock, but we managed it somehow.

Our afternoon promenade, whether before or after tea, invariably took the same direction. We went with our nurse to some public gardens where two 'giant stride' swings gathered all the children together, eagerly waiting for their turn. Many were the bygone feats of our elders, which were handed down for our admiration and imitation. How one girl, who was extraordinarily light, and a beautiful dancer, had been swung up by a very tall young man (now a celebrated doctor) till she had stuck in the branches of a chestnut tree. How, to test the skill of the swingers, a rope was stretched across from the trunk of the chestnut to the pole of the swing, and each of the four swingers had to jump it as they came round. The cleverest of these athletes was a lady who has since made her mark in the musical world. For some unexplained reason this particular joy was forbidden to us, but we 'pushed' each other as far as our strength would go; and what delight it was to rush through the air, while your companions were running as hard as they could so as to keep out of your way. I remember the compassion with which I contemplated some big girls of sixteen or so, of whom my nurse remarked severely that it was high time they gave up swinging, and wondering how life would ever be tolerable when that fatal hour struck for me. I do not think I ever felt such rapture of delight over any amusement, no, not even over dancing with a good partner.

In these days children get over the difficulties of transition

between the seasons by blue serge coats and skirts, and, indeed, they are allowed to dispense with jackets in a way that would have been thought simply suicidal when I was a little girl. To be sure their under garments are thicker, if fewer, than those we used to wear, but I have always suffered a great deal from the heat, and nearly melted away on stray warm days of spring and autumn from the amount of clothes accumulated on my unfortunate back. These it was not considered judicious to leave off till certain stated periods. The question of our wardrobe was strictly regulated, and we glided gently from the dark red or violet merino frocks, black velvet jackets and white felt hats, trimmed with terry velvet and feathers, which formed our best winter costumes, through flowered mousseline-de-laines and tiny checked silks to the prints and muslins which were never laid aside from May to October. As to what happened on the chilly and wet days I have no recollection. As a general rule we were provided with little yellow nankeen jackets for the morning, and black silk 'spencers' for the afternoon; but on one occasion, when I was just nine years old, my mother took it into her head to provide me with a grass-green quilted satin jacket, much the same colour as those bestowed on the Misses Fairchild. I stormed and railed and protested, but all in vain, and one Sunday this 'bright array' was hoisted on my unwilling shoulders, and I was led to church, feeling as if the whole congregation must be gazing at me, as no doubt they were. When I slunk into the front garden on my way upstairs I was accosted by my eldest brother. 'Good heavens, Molly!' he cried, 'what on earth have they made such a guy of you for?' His words entirely coincided with my own views. I burst into a flood of angry tears, and, tearing off the hated thing, I declared that I would never see it again—and I never did.

My winter frocks I usually disliked, as I was never fond of a mass of bright colour, such as was the fashion in those days almost as much as in these. In summer, tints were softer and paler, and I can recall my pleasure in a black and white striped mohair I had for afternoons, and in several coloured-pattern muslins, prettier surely than any that are ever seen now. Our skirts being short, we were not encumbered by the thin white petticoats of various thicknesses it was considered necessary to wear underneath; but what worried me much more, were the white sleeves that covered the arm above the elbow, as those of the frock were wide

and hanging. These under-sleeves were supposed to be held tight by an elastic band, but mine never would stay up, and 'My dear, your sleeves are coming down,' was a remark as frequently repeated to me as 'Mrs. Wragge, shoes down at heel,' to another lady.

Even when our print morning frocks began to be made high, those for evening were always cut quite low, and so I continued to have them (for best) till I came out. I looked on a smart check pink and white silk with suspicion, as being unduly smart, while I felt that a white muslin, sprigged with black and worn with a scarlet sash, was more suitable to my grown-up sisters than to me. But the one frock in which I did take hearty satisfaction was a white spotted book muslin, trimmed with rows of narrow pale blue ribbon, in which my portrait (and that of my white kitten) was painted when I was seven or eight years old. I wore it on every possible occasion, and clung to it as long as my increasing stature would permit. Even now I think that no child could have had anything prettier.

For girls from the age of fifteen onward a blue silk for best was as much a necessary article of the wardrobe as a tweed or serge now. I had one or two at various times, but I did not set much store by them. The dress that gave me most pleasure at that period of my history was a green silk, of a very soft and delicate shade, which could be worn on occasion with a clear book muslin blouse (or, as it was called then, Garibaldi). This frock was destined to be displayed at *table d'hôte* during my first trip abroad; but one fatal evening when at dinner a waiter let a spoonful of gravy fall on one side. It was sponged and rubbed, but all to no purpose—at least, in my view of the matter. My family assured me that the damage was in the folds, and would be seen by nobody. I knew it was there, and that was quite enough, and till I came home, and could get a fresh breadth inserted, that skirt remained folded away in the bottom of my box.

Those same 'Garibaldis' were a great step in the direction of enfranchisement as regards clothes, but they had their own perils. During one fearfully hot summer I happened to be paying a visit in a county that was wholly given up to croquet, and as no game ever came amiss to me, I was soon in the forefront of all the battles. One day I was forced to play out the finals of a tournament in a very arid and shadeless plain. I was beaten; but my muslin dress having a thin lining up to the throat my

sufferings were only moral and internal. My opponent, on the contrary, whose Garibaldi was worn over a low silk body, had her bare shoulders so severely scorched that she was unable to lie down all night, or to sleep for many days. I heard of her sad plight, and laid up the warning for future use.

The *début* of a girl in the provinces was (probably) a very different affair in those days from what it is now. I left school and came out when I was sixteen, but was in no danger of having my head turned from the amount of my gaiety! Half a dozen dances between December and February was all that the town then provided for the delectation of the young, supplemented by a couple of very serious dinners at home, where nobody under sixty ever put in an appearance.

The dress I wore at my first ball was neither white satin nor Bengaline, as it would be now, but it was pretty enough all the same. It was a white *gaze de Chambéry*, striped here and there with blue, with a plain skirt and a banded body. On my head I wore a wreath of sweet-smelling white clematis that had been bought in Paris, a fact that filled me with a glow of superiority.

I did not enjoy that ball at all, though I danced every dance. But it was the occasion of the re-building and 'house-warming' of a large country house, where the 'warmth' was strictly confined to the welcome given, for the corridors were icy, the floor was so sticky that you had to wrench your feet free at every step, and, to crown all, most of the guests were not only related but very intimate. I was not in the least shy, but I felt out of it, and was glad enough to go home.

As a rule, our ball-dresses were simplicity itself, and were made at home. They consisted of a long, loose skirt of tarlatan (generally white) over white silk; the body of white silk, with a 'berthe,' or trimming, to match the skirt. The material, fortunately, was cheap, and no one had any excuse for not looking fresh and trim, and personally I had the happy knack of bringing my dress home intact from every ball, however crowded. I even passed triumphantly through the ordeal of three galops danced from end to end one night in a public room, which taxed my staying powers, though they were considerable.

'Ah,' said my partner, with a sigh of satisfaction, as the last bar sounded, 'I don't often get anybody to do that now. My sister used to once, but she is twenty-seven and much too old.'

I was only seventeen.

Almost all the ball-going I have ever done in my life was over by the time I was twenty. By that time the æsthetic craze was at its height, and as I by no means shared in it, I became the object of a crusade on the part of my more modern acquaintances. 'Why don't you dress like me?' exclaimed one lady who was tall and fair and nobly planned, while I was little and dark and skinny. I did not know much about dress, for I had never had the chance—or the money—to turn theories into practice, but I was possessed of certain elementary instincts, and shaking my head with a smile, requested her to 'look on this picture—and on *this*.'

All my life I have been the prey of candid friends who have entirely failed to perceive that the candour is all on one side only. 'What a pity it is you are not taller,' exclaims one lady, to whom my personal appearance is a sore trial. 'You ought never to wear white next your skin,' cries a second, 'you are much too dark. I did not like you at all in the dress you wore last night.' 'If you take a house in Torquay this winter, you must be sure to ask the Green-Williams to stay with you. They are only just back from Australia, and it will be a great convenience to them.' My views on these and similar points are quite as clear as those of my tormenters, but I hold my peace, and generally contrive to consider the whole proceeding as a comedy.

Nothing in the history of dress is more worthy of remark than the large place held by rough garments in every modern trousseau. Five-and-twenty years ago two or three silk dresses for mornings were as necessary to every bride of good position as to the humblest woman in an American village. Now you might look over a whole winter outfit without finding one. Not a dozen years ago an old country gentleman was so distressed at the lack of this indispensable article of a bride's wardrobe, that he presented his daughter-in-law with a huge bale of dark brown silk (more fitted for a ducal housekeeper than a gay young lady), and I found the recipient eyeing it ruefully, and wondering if it was her bounden duty to have it made up, or whether it would ever be possible to fashion it into curtains.

Since I have bought my own clothes, they have been of interest to no one but the wearer. I have undergone trials on their behalf, much more difficult than being 'mistress of oneself though china fall,' and have emerged from them, I think I may

say, without loss of dignity. There was the agitating moment when a crystallised orange was crushed on the tail of a white satin with panels of great white velvet Annunciation lilies; there was the brief but agonising pause before the contents of a coffee cup, which an excited lady was waving in the air, descended on the back of my new brown velvet; and there was the last and worst episode that took place at my own house, when a celebrated dramatic critic swept his entire glass of claret into the lap of my favourite Louis XV. brocade. The dress was ruined, but to my infinite relief my friend left the house quite unconscious of the mischief he had done, as he was very short-sighted, and, like the son of Alenomok, 'I scorned to complain.'

K.

A Game of Chess.

OUTSIDE the rain had ceased, and a burst of sunshine flooded the landscape.

Is sunshine ever unwelcome? Does it not glorify the fairest scene, transfigure the dullest? I have known a hideous suburb, the haunt of the builder, the revel of the scavenger, look almost pleasant on a bright spring morning, when its little blackened, stunted trees are in bud, and the mud glistens where the trampling of many feet has broken it into pools of slime. See the interminable rows of monotonous frontage with their deadly uniformity—they look cheerful and habitable beneath the wand of the magician. A cat basks in front of one open window; a bird-cage is hung out before another; the street boys go along whistling.

But sunshine in the broad open country, sunshine that brings with it the cawing of rooks, the cooing of wood-pigeons, the scents of wood and field refreshed by showers of rain, the renewed unveiling of blue horizon in which Nature alone plays a part—what words can paint the glorious power of such a visitant?

‘Dear me, how tiresome! The sun has come out!’ said the Rev. Octavius Wotherspoon, with a peevish glance at streaming window-panes, on which every drop was now transformed into a globe of light.

Mr. Wotherspoon sat in a comfortable armchair, with a plaid over his knees. In front of him was a chess-table, and on the other side of the table, Madeline.

Madeline had just drawn up her chair and arranged her men. As her father spoke she also turned her head to the window, but she did not echo the exclamation. Instead a faint, almost inaudible, sigh escaped.

‘I made sure it was going to be a wet afternoon,’ continued Mr. Wotherspoon in aggrieved accents, ‘or I should never have taken off my boots. It looked as black as night when I came in.

These April days are a perfect nuisance; you never know where you are with them. Just look now!' indicating with the pawn in his hand the offending radiance of the sky and atmosphere. 'Just when we were comfortably settled! Had the fire lit, and everything!'

'Oh, well, papa'—Maddy, a firm little person, with a tendency to turn her bright blue eyes to the fair side of the foulest outlook, shook herself together resolutely, and hitched her low chair a shade nearer the chess-table—'we need not quarrel with the sun,' quoth she, sagely. 'It makes the room ever so much pleasanter. Oh, papa, the prism has sent its lights upon your head! Oh, you do look funny!' as he blinked and dodged. 'Wait one moment,' and she rose and moved towards an octagon-shaped piece of crystal, which was casting rainbow tints all about the room. 'There,' said Madeline, fondly arranging it elsewhere, 'it can still light us up without tormenting you, poor papa! And now for our game,' returning to her seat.

The rector, however, fidgeted uneasily in his chair; looked again at the window, anon at the chessboard, finally thrust it from him, and threw aside the plaid from his knees. Two pieces fell off the board.

'Oh, papa, what are you doing?'

'What I have got to do, I suppose. Put on my boots again and tramp away through mud and mire.'

'Indeed you shall do nothing of the kind. You were told to be careful of damp, and, what is more, *I* was told to make you obey orders. Put on that plaid again directly, sir,' and Miss Madeline picked up the fallen knight and castle and replaced them on their squares. 'Begin at once!' concluded she, authoritatively.

'Nonsense, child!' But mechanically the figure which had half risen relapsed into its former posture. 'Even if *I* don't go out—and perhaps you are right about myself, for I did feel a nip just then,' and one hand stole irresolutely towards the warm covering as Mr. Wotherspoon spoke—'but *you* ought not to be sitting indoors in a warm room with a fire, and sunshine like that without. Off you go, and I'll take a book,' and he sighed resignedly.

Madeline calmly made her first move.

'Pshaw! Nonsense! I tell you, Maddy, to go along. And, my dear, open the far window as you go and let me hear the birds shouting. There is an article in the *Nineteenth Century*——'

'Which you are not going to read. We had made up our minds for a good fight—and you know you say yourself I can give you a very good fight at chess now—and we are not going to be put off because the day clears. Dear,' said Madeline, tenderly, 'you can't suppose it is any hardship to me to give up such a little thing as——'

'It *is* a hardship, whether I suppose it or not. The roads will be in splendid condition for your bicycle. Hollo! here they come to say so!'

And the door opened to admit visitors as he spoke.

'Well, Miss Charlotte, Miss Ethel'—as two lively young creatures approached and peremptorily forbade the old gentleman's rising to receive them—'I thought you would come. I was just sending Maddy off to get ready. The rain was so heavy after luncheon that we fancied it had set in for a whole wet day. So you see what she'—indicating his daughter—'inveigled me into. 'Pon my word, it looks rather disgraceful to be caught with a chessboard at this hour,' bestowing a glance of would-be contempt upon the latter. 'Quick now, Maddy, put on your things.'

'But I am going to ask Charlotte to excuse me,' said Maddy, giving unperceived by her father a slight pinch to Charlotte's arm. 'I don't think I shall go to-day. It takes so long to get ready, that the sun may have gone in again if you wait for me,' addressing the young ladies, and steadily keeping her face turned to them alone (by which means certain information was conveyed). 'I may take a spin by myself later on. I might come and meet you in a couple of hours on your return from Hennerton. But that is all I care to do to-day.'

'Is it me you're stopping for?'—a suspicious voice in the rear. Maddy's father had learned to be suspicious. 'If you are saying *that* because you think I want this trumpery chess——'

Here, however, Charlotte Dewhurst interposed, guided by her friend's face.

'If Maddy would rather come to meet us, perhaps it would be better. We are late in starting as it is, and Hennerton is a long way off. Then, Ethel,' and the young lady turned to her sister, 'suppose we go, and Maddy follows, say in an hour and a half? There is no harm in her coming by herself, Mr. Wotherspoon, just for a mile or two along the high road. Houses all the way, you know. Then good-bye, and oh, don't get up. I do hope you will get rid of your rheumatism soon,' and Miss Charlotte tucked in the plaid with the freedom of an affectionate parishioner.

'Maddy, come and see us start. She won't be a minute,' nodding as they left the room.

Outside it was, 'Poor Maddy! I know you wanted to come. And it is such a lovely day! Well, you are a dear girl, and everybody says the best of daughters. And of course poor Mr. Wother-
spoon did look so wistfully at his chessboard, it was quite pathetic! Ethel, you mount, and I'll catch you up; I like to mount by myself.'

Then Maddy's visitor too had her private facial communication. In obedience to it Maddy slackened her steps till both had fallen behind.

'I say, Maddy, *he* won't be best pleased to see us arrive by our two selves.'

Madeline was a fair-complexioned girl, with a smooth, clear skin, in which a blush showed cruelly. Mindful of this, Charlotte had sent on her sister. The blush did not matter for herself.

'I dare say you are right,' proceeded she in her companion's ear, 'though I don't know that I could have done it myself. But,' and she hesitated a moment, 'I suppose you know that it is his last day? He goes back to his vile Foreign Office and his still viler uncle to-morrow. Do you—do you think it is quite—I mean it is your last chance, Maddy, you know.'

'I know. Thank you, Charlotte.' A low response, but resolute.

'You are sure you won't come? We would wait as long as you please. I'd arrange it. Ethel would never guess. I'd say——'

'No, I'm not coming.' Madeline played with her friend's hand. 'I have thought it all over. Charlotte, I felt mean pretending, or at least letting you all suppose it was because of papa. It *was*, in a way. I do like to please him, and he had been looking forward to his game; but it was not altogether—you know what I mean. I can't and I won't run after any man.'

'My gracious! Who could call it running after him? Hasn't he run after you enough in all conscience? He never looks at another girl when you are in the room. He——'

'Come on!' from Ethel in front.

'What am I to say?' proceeded Charlotte, hurriedly. 'Am I to say your father kept you? That you stayed at home to play chess with him? Or, what? Oh, Maddy, I wish you would have come. I do think you ought to have come. But as you won't, at least tell me what to say. Tell me anything, and I'll

say it.' She took her bicycle from the wall as she spoke. 'Am I to say——'

'Oh, say what you like.' The sun was so warm, the air so sweet, the temptation so great, that all at once, and that when it was too late, something choked in the speaker's throat. Suppose Charlotte were right after all! Suppose her wisdom were the better wisdom—her knowledge the superior knowledge! Charlotte was a superior girl. At the moment poor Maddy recalled with a pang that she had always heard it observed that Charlotte Dewhurst's opinion was worth being sought by anybody.

But Charlotte was mounting even as the reflection was made.

'Go back to your chess then, my dear, and' (Ethel had whirled round, and was again within hearing) 'I'll give your love to Mrs. Goldney,' concluded Charlotte, cleverly.

The two set off, but as they turned into the high road, one at least noted that a figure was still standing in the doorway watching.

'I do trust no harm will come of this,' thought the kindly girl as she sped along.

Even Madeline's father, albeit an unenlightened male creature, experienced a dim sense of something amiss as his prospective antagonist now seated herself with a more than usually determined air—a demeanour which conveyed not only that she meant to play well, but to play in defiance of some opposing influence, some unknown quantity whose nature he could not fathom, and whose force he could not gauge. He almost wished he had not so dutiful a daughter. It was bad for a man—pampered selfishness. As for the little disappointment about his game, a mere trifle like that would have been got over in a minute, and he would have been able to rejoice that the poor child—a lonely little thing, motherless and sisterless—was having a merry afternoon in the fresh air and with pleasant companions. It was too bad—yes, it really was too bad that he should be allowed no say in his own affairs. But even as the good man frowned, he tried a new and brilliant opening which had been much commented upon at a recent chess tournament, and the venture was so absorbing that soon all else was forgotten.

Perhaps Maddy did not do her best, or it might be that the new opening disconcerted her. Certain it was that she was quickly vanquished, and that although more than one oversight had been pointed out and given back.

'You are not giving your mind to it,' said her father, sharply.

With him chess was chess, and to play with only half a mind was an insult to the game. 'If you don't care to play, say so,' proceeded he. 'I never asked for it; I never thought of it. It was you yourself who said it would pass the time. Even when the sun came out, you insisted on not going with those girls, though I knew it would be better for you, and if your poor mother had been alive she would not have allowed you to sit indoors on a day like this; but you would have your own way. Well, I suppose it was kindly meant, only don't be so self-willed another time. I know I bother you with my hobby, but I thought you were beginning to take some kind of interest in it for its own sake.'

'Papa, what nonsense! Come, come, sir; don't be silly. "Some kind of interest" indeed! Don't I think there is no game in the world like it? Is it not one of the ambitions of my life to be a good player—a really *good* player?' A gleam stole over the rector's brow. 'And just because you have given me a beating, a merciless beating, one that makes me tingle for revenge, you add a scolding to it! As if it were my fault that you chevied my poor king into a corner and left him no loophole for escape!'

'You played badly, my dear—badly all through. You ought never to have moved your bishop from that line.'

'Papa, look here, I won't be lectured! I hate going through a game for the second time. When it is done, it is done. But if I don't make you sit up, dear gentleman,' and she bustled to place her pieces, while he cheerfully did the same, 'I give you leave to call me a fool, or any other name you please,' concluded Maddy, setting her teeth.

And she played—good heavens! how she played! The sun faded from the room, a fresh blast of April rain rattled against the windows, the fire sank, but still the fight went on.

Never had Mr. Wotherspoon enjoyed one like it. He spoke of it for years after. A very fiend, he said, seemed to have possessed his whilom pupil. It was impossible to baffle her; it was all he could do to hold his own against her.

Gradually—was it credible? but so it actually seemed—she was drawing ahead. The rector 'Pished' and 'Pshawed,' half indignant, half amused, more and more eager to win at last. It was all very well to be defied, to have his best powers drawn out and his most stringent efforts demanded, but he meant to show

himself master in the long run. The chit was laughing at him, was she?

In truth, it seemed no matter to Maddy what moves she made, she had *that* in her which inspired each one. Insensibly she too became absorbed, enthralled.

'It is not much use hoping for a recognition,' said a voice through the open window. 'I may wait till Doomsday if I don't force an entrance,' and two long legs followed the voice and approached the chessboard. 'What determined players you are! Mr. Wotherspoon, I knew *you* were a swell at this, but I did not guess how you got your practice. Miss Wotherspoon, am I intruding? I see you are at a crucial point—at least, I suspect so, for I scarcely know a king from a queen—but may I sit down and watch? I promise not to speak a single word till the game is over.'

'Sit then,' said Madeline, nodding and laughing—but she trembled in every limb, though she spoke so lightly. 'Papa, if Mr. Umfreville will really do as he says, if he can be depended upon to keep his word, he may stay, may he not? But mind, not a syllable,' and she shook a warlike finger at the visitor, who had drawn up his chair.

'You see we really are so very near the end,' apologised the rector, all courtesy, but keeping a firm grip on the situation with his eyes, lest by the interruption he should lose a distinct advantage obtained by his last move, 'that if you would kindly——' and the polite accents died away. Bertie Umfreville leaned his head on his hand. 'He has the wit to see what a near thing it is, and to be really interested,' reflected the speaker.

And from that moment he did better.

Indeed, all Madeline's luck seemed to have deserted her. She blundered; then retrieved herself, only to blunder again. She would have liked to win, she was even more eager to win now than before, but the silent eyes of the watcher had a fatal effect—or else it was possible that they had a contrary one on her antagonist, that he was stimulated by what unnerved her.

Be this how it may, the game was lost and won within a much briefer period than either had in reality contemplated, age and experience coming out triumphant from the contest.

'Pon my word, I hardly thought I should, though!' cried the rector, with a sigh of relief and a crow of victory. 'Never was so put to it in my life! Half an hour ago it seemed all over with me! That chit, she played like the very hum—hum—hum! I

wish you had been here all through, Umfreville, as you seem to take an interest in looking on. Well, it has been a glorious match,' and he rubbed his hands, and took out his watch. 'We have been at it—let me see—we began at three o'clock, and it is nearly five. To have been held at bay all this time by *her* !'

'Miss Wotherspoon is a first-rate player, then ?' Rather to Madeline's surprise, there was real and keen pleasure in the tone. 'I was told you had stayed at home to play chess, but I had no idea you were such an enthusiast,' and a smiling eye was turned upon her next. 'I am awfully glad. It—it must be such a resource. You play a great deal, I suppose ?'

'Every winter night since she has been fit to give me a game,' Maddy's father, who was now ready to play the host and talker, answered for her. 'She has improved wonderfully of late. I shouldn't mind backing her against anyone in *this* neighbourhood. After to-day I'd even go further.'

'Indeed ! It is a charming accomplishment.'

'Tis more than an accomplishment, 'tis a science—as Maddy plays it. I have taught her, so she has had the best of teaching ; but she took to it naturally.' And he prattled on.

Then tea came in ; but although Mr. Umfreville stayed for tea, and strolled out into the garden afterwards, and there *was* the opportunity (for so Madeline assured her friend subsequently), nothing came of it. No, Bertie was as nice as ever, as pleasant as ever, and—and—just a little at the last—a little—Charlotte knew what ! 'It was when saying "Good-bye," holding my hand, and begging for the flower it held—I wish now I had not given it, but somehow he seemed to take it of himself—still——' and the speaker's eyes fell, and her lip quivered a little, for the hour had come and gone, and borne no fruit.

'And I was so pleased when I saw him rush off, and knew he had come straight here,' sighed Charlotte, sympathetically. 'I put that horrid chess all upon your father—let it appear that you were almost made to stay. I am afraid I was rather unfair to poor dear Mr. Wotherspoon.'

'It is no matter, Charlotte. Papa would not mind. But it did no good. Only'—and there was a sudden stiffening of the small figure, and a setting of the firm little mouth—'only I am glad, more glad than I can say, that I stayed ; and stayed, as he saw for himself, because of a paltry game of chess !'

* * * *

Spring had passed into summer, and an invitation came for Madeline. It was from Mrs. Goldney, the lady to whose house, it will be remembered, the bicycle party resorted on the day above narrated. Mrs. Goldney was going to pass a week in Town, and would Maddy Wotherspoon go with her, and be her guest in the empty flat kindly placed at her disposal by an absent friend? Maddy, who had been drooping somewhat in the warm May weather, accepted with a long-drawn breath of gratitude. Change of any sort was welcome, and change to London! She looked brighter than she had done for weeks past when she ran up to her father for leave to say 'Yes.'

There was not even the worry of leaving him. He also was going away. It was the time for his annual visit to an old chum at Oxford, and Mrs. Goldney, knowing this, had bethought her of Madeline. Nothing could have worked better.

'You will not mind my paying a few tiresome calls, my dear?' It was the second day after the ladies' arrival at their pretty little nest in St. James' Place. 'I promise you a few gay houses, but just let us go through one or two duty calls first. Put on your smartest things, Maddy. Make yourself look as pretty as you please,' and when Maddy presently exhibited herself in proof of obedience, the elder lady took her in critically point by point. 'You want a bunch of flowers at your waist, my dear—roses to match your hat. Otherwise you are just right. We will get the roses as we go. And later on we will send away the victoria and sit in the Park.'

'And perhaps we may meet *him* there!' thought Maddy.

There could be no harm in such a meeting. She had schooled herself to feel that nothing more was ever to be expected from the pleasant friend who had made so much of her down in the depths of the country, now that the episode was over, and she was sure, quite sure, that all she wished or thought of was to see him now and again, and, quite calmly and unconcernedly, have a little aimless, agreeable talk. Moreover, it would be as well to show that she was nothing loath so to meet; it would be for her own credit, for her own pride, to exhibit herself gay and good-humoured, enjoying her little bit of 'season,' and entering into it with zest.

Mrs. Goldney would narrate all they were going to do and see, while she, Madeline, would stand smiling by; and perhaps in her pretty summer toilette he would even look at her as he used to do, approvingly, admiringly. She smiled in anticipation—smiled to herself—as the victoria flew along. It almost went too

fast, Maddy thought; she hoped the calls would not be got through too soon for the correct hour in the Park.

'Perhaps you would not mind coming in here, my dear? 'Tis only an old man—but you get on so well with old men. And he is something of an invalid.' The large front door of a mansion in Grosvenor Square stood open, and Mrs. Goldney had returned from making her own query on the door-step. 'He is at home, and able to see us. I asked myself, because I wanted to hear from the old butler how he really was. We need not stay long.'

'What splendid rooms!' murmured Maddy as she followed her leader. Mrs. Goldney looked at her rather curiously at the words.

At length the last room was reached, and from the farthest corner a bent figure reared itself upright as the ladies approached. In front of the broad armchair now vacant was displayed a chess-board. Instinctively Maddy thought of her father.

'You are playing chess all by yourself?' said Mrs. Goldney, glancing at the board.

'Trying a few moves, ma'am. I have my paper here with the account of some,' and he proceeded to enlarge. On a sudden he perceived that the perfunctory interest on one auditor's countenance was not shared by the other, that the younger lady was really listening with intelligent comprehension. He wheeled round and addressed her. 'I'm an old bore, Miss—Miss—excuse me, I don't know your name. But a chess-player is a bore or nothing; and you seem to——'

'My father, sir, is a chess-player, and so am I.'

'You?' A pair of shaggy eyebrows stood out in a sort of amused contempt.

'Indeed she is,' struck in Mrs. Goldney, prepared to dissipate the contempt. 'So good a one that her father seldom cares for any other antagonist. You play regularly, my dear, I think?'

'But do you mean——? Come, come, is not your friend going a little too far? Your father a regular player, and you fight him! Forgive me, my dear young lady, but when I look at you——'

'You try her,' cried Mrs. Goldney, nettled by the incredulity of his air. 'You will not doubt my word a second time. Maddy, I am in earnest,' laughing and glancing at the clock. 'Allow me to leave you here for half an hour while I go round the north side of the Park—all uninteresting people there, my dear—and I will pick you up when I have dropped my cards about. Shall I?'

'Dear me, I am flattered; but what does your young lady say? It is rather cruel——'

'No, indeed. I shall be delighted. Do let me,' cried Madeline sincerely. She was not disinclined to show her skill, and at all times was ready to fall in with the whims of others. Obviously Mrs. Goldney wished her to stay, and as for the poor old gentleman, it was like her dear daddy over again, the alacrity with which he popped his men on to their places.

'So far, so good,' said Mrs. Goldney, as she left the room. She was gone longer than she said, but an outcry against so speedy a return assailed her ears on re-entering.

'Oh, dear, I *can't* go,' from Maddy.

'That you can't,' cried her antagonist, gleefully. 'No, indeed, Mrs. Goldney, I'll send her after you. She can have the carriage to go when she pleases. But here she must stay—that is, pardon me, I am a selfish curmudgeon, I ought to have said, "On my knees I beg you to stay."' It was a pretty sight. Mrs. Goldney might be excused for thinking she never saw a prettier, and for letting her eyes linger for a moment, first on the softened outlines of a countenance naturally harsh and forbidding, and secondly on the bright features of the fearless, radiant young creature, who, so innocent of the momentous issues at stake, thus as it were played with destiny.

'Will you stay, Maddy?'

Maddy signified a willing consent. 'Thank you, my child; God bless you,' said the old man.

* * * *

'Well, and you got on so grandly that you actually won one game out of three! That was a triumph. I am so glad!' cried the good-natured chaperon, on hearing the history of the afternoon. 'I feel as proud as if I had got the better of the old fellow myself, with his airs and graces. 'Pon my word, he was hardly civil.'

'Indeed, Mrs. Goldney, he was. Oh, you mean in despising me for an adversary. But I assure you he was more than civil before I had done with him. You should have heard how he complimented me. I am to go again—that is, if you will spare me. I said to-morrow morning, but, of course, if you have anything else for me to do——'

'To-morrow morning,' mused Mrs. Goldney, as though turning over engagements in her mind; 'no, I don't think to-morrow morning is filled up. To-morrow is rather a free day. There are so many things one can do on a Saturday afternoon, I left it open for us to decide among them. I have had the offer of Hurlingham tickets, and there are matinées; but we need not fix

to-night. Anyhow, the morning is vacant, and as it is a kindness—— Are you to write?’

‘Not if I go. I said eleven o’clock, and—and he wanted me to stay for luncheon, but——’

‘Very well, my dear; why not? It would suit me very well. I can lunch with some friends, and call for you afterwards. You would not mind going by yourself? And Taylor could convey you to the house.’

‘Thank you. Oh, I should like it; he is a dear old gentleman, and you know I am accustomed to going about by myself. It was so funny,’ continued Madeline, laughing. ‘Neither of us knew the other’s name, not even at the last, though we made such friends, and had our tea together. He was quite in a fuss because there wasn’t much of a tea, and said his servants got into bad ways with having only himself to bring it for, and he never eats sweet things. However, it was all very grandly set out, and a number of menservants fidgeting round; and I couldn’t help thinking how sad it must be to sit there so lonely——’

‘Very sad, my dear. All the middle part of the day he is quite solitary, except on Saturdays, I believe, when he has a relation who comes home early, and whom you may possibly see to-morrow.’ The speaker paused, looking keenly, but the face before her was as innocent as ever.

‘What is his name, Mrs. Goldney?—I mean, my old friend. Who is he?’

‘Maddy, if you don’t mind, I should prefer not to tell you just yet. It is a name rather well known, and you might be a little abashed——’

‘Oh, I am quite easy with him now, Mrs. Goldney.’

‘Go on being so. But you have done so well that just for to-morrow——’

‘All right,’ said Maddy, laughing.

She could not help being a little curious, however, and her adventure assumed a new aspect. A well-known name? Probably in the chess world. If so, what news for her father! What tribute to the old rector’s powers, and what a theme for his tongue, should it prove that she, who had had no other instruction than his own, had been pitted against some ‘well-known’ authority, and further, evoked commendation where scepticism had been previously ill-concealed! Maddy chuckled as she rang the bell with a loud peal. She had come to play chess, and she

did not care how loud was the demand, nor how big the door which opened to admit her.

And she was obviously expected and made welcome. She felt it, knew it. The very footman who preceded her up the broad staircase let it be seen that he did so with alacrity; whilst within the vast saloon, in the selfsame corner where he had been found before, sat her old friend, his chess-board ready in front of him.

But he hurriedly pushed it aside to greet her. He stood up, gout and all, as he acknowledged her punctuality and expressed his obligations. Finally he suggested that as the room was warm, and she had kindly promised to remain for luncheon—(question mark, to which Maddy signified assent)—she should take off her hat and cape.

She did so, and sat down to play, in her simple morning frock, as though within the walls of her own home, and Bertie Umfreville, coming in two hours later, found her thus.

‘My nephew,’ said Madeline’s antagonist, looking up as the latter approached. ‘My nephew, Miss—Miss—dear me, I am so stupid I have not yet—but you know each other?’ in surprise, as the two shook hands. ‘But you did not tell me so yesterday, Bertie.’

‘You did not tell *me*, sir, the name of—’

‘Hum—ah—yes, of course. Ha! ha! ha! rather comical, to be sure. I only told him I had enjoyed a delightful afternoon, and owed it to the presence of a very—no, I must not repeat all I said, must I, nephew? Well, perhaps *you* will introduce *me* now, for I believe we are in mutual ignorance.’

The young man smiled. ‘My uncle, Sir John Umfreville—Miss Witherspoon. The uncle you have often heard me speak of. As I see the game is over—’

‘But we are going to have another before luncheon,’ cried Sir John, eagerly. ‘There is plenty of time. Miss Witherspoon does me the honour to stay—*Damnation! what are you doing, sir?*’ For Miss Witherspoon was being led gently from the room.

‘Madeline,’ said a voice in her ear, ‘will you trust me for a few short minutes? All will be explained directly. I love *you*—have loved you always—and thought, hoped, fancied you returned—oh, don’t look at me like that. You *will* forgive me, I know, when you hear all. I could not ask you without his leave,’ signifying by a gesture to whom he referred, ‘and even to let you know my heart seemed an insult if I could do no more. Then, when I found you were a chessplayer—and a really good one—it came to me all at once to devise this trap. I thought it would

work, and it has. Mrs. Goldney—no, you must not be angry with her either. She is the kindest and best of creatures. Without her aid I could never have managed. Now, dear, one moment; wait for me here'—he had brought her to an empty room—'and when I return——'

Perhaps she ought not to have waited. Perhaps it was beneath her dignity to accept the part thrust upon her by an artful lover and his accomplice; but poor Maddy certainly could not have walked away had she tried. The world was spinning round with her. And, moreover, had she attempted to escape she must needs have passed through the other apartment, in which the little drama was now being worked out to its close.

'Upon my word, I couldn't have believed it of you, Herbert.'

Herbert carefully silent.

'To want to marry a country parson's daughter! A pretty girl, I allow, and—for I won't take back my word—as nice a girl as I have ever met. But to befool your poor old uncle like this; get at him on his weak side——'

'All's fair in love and war, you know, sir.'

'Tis a rascally proverb, nephew, invented of the devil! But to say "No" now, would be to put an affront upon an innocent young lady. You swear she knew nothing of it? I believe you, for I had the testing of my own eyes, and, faith! I thought she'd have had a fit when you walked in! Well, well, we do want a petticoat in this dull house, that's certain; and if one of us must marry, rather you than I. And she's a good girl, and a pretty one—yes, she is, uncommonly pretty, you dog; that's what fetched *you*—not the goodness. And—and—she plays a very tolerable game of chess; though I could improve her if I had her in my own hands. Tut, tut, bring her in!'—and one stride took his auditor to the door.

Left to himself, the old man returned to his board. 'See if I don't give that old parson father of hers a drubbing,' muttered he to himself.

But to Madeline he only said, 'My dear, if you take this unworthy scapegrace I'll do all that lies in my power to make you happy. He is not, perhaps, quite so bad a fellow as you might think, although he has played us both a shabby trick. We must forgive him, I suppose; and it still wants half an hour to luncheon, but'—looking first into one face and then into the other as he shuffled past on his way to the door—'somehow I don't think there's time for a game of chess!'

L. B. WALFORD.

A Hampshire Common.

ONE of the delicious little tributaries of that queen of the 'chalk streams,' the Test, flowed at one time through the peaceful valley that lay spread out beneath my wooded Hampshire home; a valley sprinkled with small red brick farms and thatched cottages, with roofs sometimes reaching right down to the lush vegetation of the rich water meadows. Thus in a way I might almost call myself a Test-bred man. But the stream has ceased to flow regularly so high up the valley as H——, and only now and then at considerable intervals is there water in the meadows beneath the steep 'hanging' of oak and underwood, while it must be fully ten years, if not more, since a trout ventured so far up. My trout fishing has therefore been mostly in other streams and other parts of the country. I never thought to lessen in loyalty to the beautiful Derbyshire Wye and to the dainty and sedate little waters of Hertfordshire, but fear that a few days—crowded days of glorious life indeed—on the Bransbury Common waters by Longparish have tended to have that effect.

Neither the angler nor the gunner, in the course of his sporting expeditions, can often, in this country, come upon a spot richer in bird, flower, and insect life than Bransbury. It is a wild and marshy tract of some hundreds of acres lying in the midst of a delightfully wooded, water-meadowed, and very smiling district of North-West Hampshire. Hard by, at well-named Longparish, lived the worthy old Colonel Hawker, whose books and whose quaint diary are still affectionately read. After having honourably and ably served his country in the great Napoleonic wars he settled down to the life of a good old country gentleman, but found plenty of time for both music and literature. Here he angled and shot year in and year out for half a lifetime. The country is still a thoroughly sporting one. In mayfly time you cannot fail to notice at the entrance of every inn you pass hereabouts implements of the angle, such as wading

stockings, fishing baskets, and many a good rod with gut cast fluttering in the breeze. Game, too, is still plentiful, both furred and feathered. I think that if the sturdy Colonel could but return to his happy hunting grounds he would find things little altered for the worse, though perhaps he would be a trifle nettled at the conduct of the Test trout, if he angled for them with one of those rough old casts of flies—'yellow dun at bottom and red palmer bob'—he loved to put on seventy or eighty years since. The thatched cottages, many of them containing the stout beams which tell of a time when bricks and mortar were still scarce in such out-of-the-world districts, must be much the same as they were in his day. Their gardens will be certainly growing the same herbs and old-fashioned blooms, and in not a few of them I noticed—not altogether with satisfaction—that the old picturesque but cruel beehives still lingered on; nor do the solid red brick farmhouses and great farmyards bear signs of material change. The scythe has to some extent been superseded on the large farms, as has here and there the hand-driven plough, and there is now a railway station at Longparish—a very pretty and neat one, be it added—but other changes are few and far between. Bransbury Common itself is as untouched by advancing civilisation as Exmoor Forest.

Bransbury is the weird home, as I soon discovered to my delight, of the intensely shy and skulking water-rail, the 'drumming' or 'humming' snipe—that odd little bird, 'all belly and bill,' as Mr. Emerson has humorously put it—of the beautiful cotton sedge, of the greasy fritillary butterfly, of the cinnabar or pink underwing moth, and last, but to the angler-naturalist assuredly not least, of the most splendid trout. The common is watered by three streams, the Test proper, the 'Old River,' and the 'Small River,' as well as by several springs and feeders. I came upon the greasy fritillary, an insect which many ardent entomologists are never fortunate enough to see in a wild state, while I was stalking a golden-hued crimson-spotted trout, and it made me forget all about angling for a few minutes. How few sensations are there more pleasurable than that of the once collector who espies for the first time on the wing a scarce or local insect which he has in past times often greatly coveted. *Artemis* is possibly not the only scarce and interesting butterfly to be found on Bransbury in due season, but at the time I was there—the time of the mayfly and of the scented wild rose of June, and of the odour of fresh-mown hay—there were only orange tips and small heaths in any

quantity on the wing. The stream itself is rich in those delicate and exquisite creatures the *Ephemeridæ*, among which the perfect primrose-tinted little yellow dun of May and the almost transparent spinners, or perfect forms of the blue dun and the iron blue dun, never cease to delight and amuse a lover of insect life. These mayflies and spinners dancing up and down in the air are ever a feature of the quiet summer evening scene by the chalk streams which Charles Kingsley loved so much to write about.

The common boasts many elegant and refreshing plants. Among the orchids, which grow in the greatest profusion, I noticed the early, the spotted, and the fragrant. The last-named derives its specific name *Conopsea* from its somewhat fanciful resemblance to the family of insects called *Conops* by Linnæus. The resemblance is not such a good one as that of the strange green man orchis, which grows in fair quantity in some of our North Hampshire woods, and has the comical appearance of a naked figure, nor as that of the pretty bee orchis. Ragged robin flourishes, of course, everywhere on this marshy spot, as does the buckbean and grass of Parnassus. These, however, were only a few of the sweet plants which our nosegays each day contained. Here and there on the common are patches of the glossy silken cotton sedge; close to the river's brink the yellow iris in abundance; on the higher ground wild roses and honeysuckle in any quantity.

The bird-life of Bransbury is, perhaps, the most attractive feature of all. Scores of lapwings perpetually wheel about, uttering their mournful notes by day, and often when the moon is up by night too; you are constantly flushing snipe; and in one corner of the common which the children of the hamlet—birds'—nesters to their finger-tips—cannot reach owing to the depth of the boggy water, a small colony of wild ducks bring up their young in perfect security. By a little creek I disturbed a family party. The male bird, though obviously concerned on behalf of his young, withdrew without unnecessary delay, whilst the female, feigning to be hurt in a way that struck me as being rather overdone, returned and fluttered clamorously about almost within reach of my nine-foot rod. Presently I came upon the young, which were well able to look after themselves. They fled across the river in a long line with swiftness and decision, their mother loudly bringing up the rear, and seeming almost to push some of them into the sheltering rushes of the opposite bank. It was all so unnecessary, this extraordinary caution! The water-rail some-

times resorts to the same device of feigning to be injured. One which I flushed close to the dusty summer road in a very boggy spot deceived me for a few seconds. She no doubt had a nest hard by in one of the great firm and dry 'mats,' as the country people call these tufts of thick grass in the marshes, but I searched for it in vain. The water-rail brings up two broods every season. It is pleasant indeed to find this pretty bird so much at home, so almost abundant by our chief Hampshire stream—I flushed several one day—for it is getting terribly scarce even in some of its acknowledged strongholds and marshy fastnesses. An authority on bird-life in the Norfolk Broads has told us that he fears the water-rail will one day be as rare in that district as the fast disappearing spotted crake, its near relative. The poor diffident creature has enemies and to spare without man molesting it. Long may the water-rail find a safe abiding-place in the valley of the Upper Test! I shall ever associate it with a delightful angling holiday in a land as fresh and sweet as that which the old writer must have had in mind when he broke out into his rhapsody about the 'friendly cottage where the landlady is good and the daughter pure and innocent, where the room is cleanly, the sheets smelling of lavender, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall. There he can enjoy the company of a talkative brother-angler, have his trouts dressed for supper, tell tales, sing old tunes, or make a catch. There he can talk of the wonders of nature with pious admiration, or find some harmless sport to content him and pass away a little time without offence to God or injury to man.'

G. A. B. DEWAR.

The American Ranchman.

MR. ANDREW CARNEGIE, Scotch-American millionaire and author of *Triumphant Democracy*, says somewhere that what capitalists are always on the look out for is The Man; that is, of course, the man to entrust with funds and to carry their plans into execution. It matters nothing to them, he says, whether or not the man when found has anything of his own to contribute. If he is the right man, he will soon create capital; and if not, the capital he is using will soon get away from him. This appears to be accepted by them as an economic truth as fully established as any of the fundamental laws of economical science. The law, then, if law it can be called, presumably operates in a uniform manner from the top to the bottom of the financial scale, and affects the man with a few hundreds with the same certainty that it does the millionaire.

We shall soon find that the law has its application to the subject of this article—the American ranchman. Let us take a favourable specimen, and let us out of the plenitude of our resources supply him with funds, and set him to work to make more out of them. For convenience in alluding to him we may as well give him a name, which will also serve to make his personality a little more real to us. We will call him Mr. Wilson. We will not give him any considerable sum in cash. As a ranchman who has won his way step by step to a point where he is the owner of, say, three hundred and twenty acres of land, a hundred head of cattle, two work teams, four or five saddle ponies, a brood mare or two, and the necessary waggons, machinery, and implements, he has very likely never been ‘a hundred dollars ahead’ at any time in his career. He may have had two or three times that sum in his possession, but never for more than a very few days. This property of his will, according to the value of his land, make him worth from five to eight thousand dollars, and, starting as he did from the very bottom, he has most likely been from fifteen to

twenty years in accumulating it. From now on, however, he should go a little faster. His herd is getting big enough to give him a little money over and above expenses to reinvest, and his strides will lengthen out. We have started with him at this point because many Englishmen who come out bring money enough with them to give them at once about a similar start. The Englishman, however, is generally an example of the wrong man using capital. In a few years, in accordance with the workings of this law, his capital will have melted like last year's snow, while Mr. Wilson will be far ahead, having climbed two feet where the Englishman fell six. He has been creating capital and the Englishman losing it.

It would make this article too technical to be of interest to the general reader to follow in protracted detail the operation of a ranche throughout the entire year, but a brief outline is necessary to show the American ranchman's method, and will, perhaps, not be tedious. Such ranchmen as Mr. Wilson are not big stockmen who have a large capital involved.

The day of big herds is nearly past, and cattle are kept for the most part in 'bunches' of from one to three hundred. As most of the winter ranges have been eaten out to a point where there is not feed enough left to 'poison a mosquito if it was all strychnine,' provision has to be made for wintering them, and it is hard to do this for a number much exceeding the latter figure. A ranche of three hundred and twenty acres will carry from one to three hundred head of cattle and fifteen or twenty horses, according to its merits. Part of it will be arable, part hay meadow, and whatever is not suitable for either of these purposes, pasture. The cattle for a season, varying according to the location from nine or possibly ten months in the year to seven, run on the 'range' or unoccupied land common to all, and have to be taken care of at home during the rest of the year. On such a ranche, farming—that is, agriculture—is not the main issue. What crop is put in is for the needs of the stock; oats for home consumption, and perhaps a little wheat and barley for chicken feed. Where it can be done, potatoes enough for home consumption are raised, as the lady of the house takes care that a vegetable garden is not omitted. The bulk of the produce of the ranche is hay for stock feed.

The busiest times in these ranches are in the spring, when the crop is being put in, and again in haying and harvest. After harvest usually comes what is known as the 'fall round-up,' when

the cattle on the ranges are gathered and the beef picked out. Then the cattle are turned loose again and run out for from two to three months later, when they are gathered again and taken home by their respective owners. During the winter the principal work on a ranche of this kind is the feeding of the stock, though nearly all ranchmen who live in a timbered country work part of the winter in the timber, getting out fence-poles and posts, firewood, and logs for building. A ranchman is always adding to his sheds and outhouses. The most anxious time is in the early spring, when the cattle have gone through the long winter often with insufficient feed. The spring rains and snows are very trying to weak stock, and as this too is the time when the calves begin to be dropped, the ranchman has now to devote much time and attention to his herd. As spring opens up, later or sooner according to the season and location, but always anxiously looked for, grass starts and the cattle are turned on the range again, except probably a few invalids who need a little more nursing, and the ranchman draws a long breath of relief as he rides home that evening.

Such in brief is a ranchman's year. His cattle turned out, he can give his whole attention to the spring work, and Mr. Wilson, who is going to put in about twenty acres of grain and three or four of potatoes, and has, perhaps, as many as eighty or a hundred acres of meadow that he wants harrowed, has a hand hired to help him. Mark here where Mr. Wilson gets ahead of his English fellow-ranchman. Having this hand hired, he is exceedingly careful to keep him at the work that pays. He is there to plough, and for every reason, for the crop's sake and to get the value of the man's wages out of him, what Mr. Wilson lives for at present is to get that man into the field every morning as early as may be, and not have him, as the Englishman does, 'monkey-ing' round the barn and corrals, cleaning stables or even milking. Breakfast at this house at this time of the year is certainly not later than six, and possibly at half-past five, and before this the plough team has been fed, curried, and harnessed. Breakfast swallowed, the hand takes his team and is actually at work very likely shortly after six o'clock. Now at the English house they probably get up half an hour later, and the English lady of the house, not being so expeditious as Mrs. Wilson, thinks she is doing very well, as indeed she is for her, if she has breakfast ready by half-past six. Perhaps even, as is very common on English ranches, her husband got breakfast ready himself. If so,

the hired man fed the horses and milked three or four cows in the interval between bed and breakfast, and left the currying, harnessing, and stable cleaning to be done afterwards. They sit down to breakfast, then, at the time that Mr. Wilson's man is just 'hitching' on to his plough, and leaving the house at seven, have still half an hour's work before they can be in the field. Both men, employer and employé, have been on the move ever since they got up, yet see what a start Mr. Wilson's ploughing has got. On that ranche Mrs. Wilson does the milking at this busy season and their little boy cleans the stable, perhaps not very thoroughly, but well enough for practical purposes. The Englishman, not expecting this of his wife, and having no little boy old enough to be of any help, does these things himself or has to pay some one else to do them. The men themselves prefer Mr. Wilson's way. 'You don't have hardly any chores at Wilson's,' one will say to another. 'Just your team to take care of and do your ploughing. A man's work is pretty nigh done when he leaves the field over there.' The difference that this makes in expedition is remarkable, and carried on over a month or six weeks effects a very considerable saving. It is in saving here and saving there and saving all the time that receipts on a ranche are made to exceed expenditure.

These remarks apply equally to Mr. Wilson's method in haying and harvest. Whenever he has men hired he is bound to have them busy at the work that pays in working hours; and if there is any variation from custom in the length of these it will be in the men's favour. This tells again when all is counted. There comes a load of hay to the stack just when it is a nice question whether it is 'quitting time,' or not. On Mr. Wilson's ranche the waggon will be unloaded that night—on the English ranche it will stand till next morning. This practice of calling it 'quitting time' a few minutes earlier than it really is, is apt to stretch considerably if not checked at the outset, so that on some ranches where the boss is slack, when a load has been pitched off and it still lacks twenty minutes or so to complete the day, you will see teams unharnessed and led to the stable on the plea 'There isn't time to make another load to-night.' There is time, my friends, if you hurry a little, and if it does take you five minutes past hours, five minutes a piece extra will not come so hard on each of you as twenty minutes short for three or four of you will come on one. No one will have any difficulty in believing that Mr. Wilson, whose reputation as a just but rather exacting employer has long

since been established, does not find this game tried on him with anything like the same frequency or persistency that the Englishman does. When the Englishman gives in it is from a mixture of motives, of which perhaps the principal is that he is not really in his own mind certain what the custom is and whether the men have not got the right of it. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, furnishes his own custom, and these delicate scruples give him no trouble.

The spring work over and his hand paid off ten days earlier than the Englishman got through, Mr. Wilson feels less 'rushed,' as he expresses it, but he still keeps busy. You hear no foolishness from him about a man being his own boss and not having to go out if he don't want. He does want. He appreciates the fact that he is his own boss more highly perhaps than the man who has this saying for ever in his mouth, and from a more noble motive he feels himself worthy to be. But he knows, no one better, that a man if he is to make a success of ranching must not make every trifling shower or finger ache an excuse for 'laying off,' but must himself be his own severest taskmaster. He can find any number of jobs, and could keep a hand all the year round if he chose and always have him busy, but, close figurer as he is, balancing it all in his mind, he decides that he can get along without one, and it will be easier on 'the woman.'

The years of diligent work spent on the ranche are bringing their reward. He has got his business so compacted, as it were, that a single person can attend to nearly all of it and still do it right. He has turned the water on his meadows and has his irrigating to attend to. This job on most ranches is either only half done, or if properly done takes up pretty nearly the whole of a man's time. Mr. Wilson, however, has in the course of years got his irrigating system to work nearly automatically, and an hour or so every other day will be enough. Besides this, he has to 'keep track' of the whereabouts of his cattle on the range. This job and irrigating are the two principal employments between the spring work and haying. A ranchman's cattle are what he looks to for by far the greater part of his income. Nearly all the work done on the ranche is for their use and benefit, and they have to repay him. To increase his herd as the capacity of his ranche increases is the ranchman's idea. As long as a man has only a few cattle, say perhaps twenty-five cows, he can give them the best of care, and all the feed in the winter they can 'lay to,' and the increase will reach a very high percentage. Quite likely every cow will bring

a calf for the first year or two. As the numbers increase, however, the percentage drops. It is always much better in a new country and on a fresh range. Here is an opportunity for industry in stock raising to show itself. In an early day when large herds were the fashion, the 'industry' many men displayed in securing a large 'calf crop' was through the medium of a branding iron. It used to be a common saying on the prairies that a good rustler with a branding iron would beat any man's herd of cows in the matter of increase. By the word 'rustler' was meant an energetic unscrupulous man. One would hear of some big stockman and be told that he started ten years ago with a single black steer and branded over two hundred calves the first year—a truly phenomenal increase. But to get back to our ranchman. A man like Mr. Wilson, then, who is doing everything he can legitimately to get along, and grudges no pains, rides frequently among his cattle, taking special notice that the fathers of the herd have not wandered off. This is a duty which it is excessively easy to neglect. It can be done any time, and consequently with many men never gets done at all. Many ranchmen when they turn their cattle out in the spring never see them again till the fall. Men of Mr. Wilson's type, however, know better. They know that if there is any money in the business at all it is in the increase, and spare no pains that this shall be as large as possible. Mr. Wilson's careful attendance to this is one of the principal reasons that he is doing so much better than his neighbours. He has an advantage over our English friend, too, as regards keeping his cattle together. His cattle have grown up on the range close round home, and are all 'located.' He can find them all, with the exception of perhaps one or two, in half a day's ride. The Englishman who bought his cattle in a bunch and drove them in finds that they wander a good deal. Any stockman will tell you that a herd of cattle used to a range are worth two or three dollars a head more to a man than 'strangers.' Of course they will 'locate' in time, but it takes time, and there will be a percentage of loss, while quite likely Mr. Wilson has never yet lost an animal and not known what became of it.

It is as impossible as it would be tedious to follow Mr. Wilson systematically through every day. Sufficient to say that anyone making him a visit will be almost sure to find him busy at something. Such a man as he is, penetrated with the idea of 'getting there,' and seeing himself well on the road, is fired with an enthusiasm which craves to be employed. This furnishes the

impulse that urges him to hurl himself out of bed night after night in the early spring, when the young calves are expected, especially in the mountain districts, and pulling on his boots and taking a lantern to go out to the corrals and stables to see if there be any new-comers, and if so to see that they and their mothers are all right before he leaves them. The Englishman knows the importance of this, and has perhaps set his alarm clock with the same intention. But when the alarm sounds and the storm is howling, he is exceedingly apt from the depths of his blankets to mutter, 'D—— the calves!' and stay where he is. Or, if not so hardened as this, to tell himself he will get up in a minute, and waiting to nerve himself to the effort, be lost. Mr. Wilson has no such feeling to overcome. He certainly would not hesitate to consign the calves to perdition if he felt that way, but he knows that every calf saved now means ten or twelve dollars next fall; and what to this veteran, inured to hardship and bred in unconscious self-denial as regards personal comfort, is the effort of getting up and going out when money is at stake? It is what he is there for, part of the day's work, so to say, and a most important part; and he would say if he were asked that any man who grudged that little trouble was no ranchman, and had no business with stock. In this instance mark again the difference that training and the habits of a lifetime make. How much easier for the native, bred as has been described, and accustomed nearly all his life to be the responsible person and the one to take the brunt of the disagreeables, is some such effort as this than it can be for the Englishman, used all his life, till the last few years, at all events, to having the disagreeable jobs done for him! If he does emulate the native and does turn out night after night, surely the more credit is his due.

This same nervous energy that must find an outlet prompts Mr. Wilson to the performance of a number of minor duties, some of which even a good ranchman may hardly think necessary, many of which a moderately good ranchman will neglect, and nearly all of which a shiftless and idle one will decline even to consider. Taking care of what he has got is a part of Mr. Wilson's method, just as much as striving for more. Here too, as a rule, he beats the Englishman, who from his training is more apt to be careless, and is also, to tell the truth, a good deal more ready to sit down. A few minutes at a newspaper in the short time Mr. Wilson allows himself to 'set around' after supper before he seeks his bed will satisfy his longing for literature, but the least literary

Englishman will like to read a novel once in a while, and may lose half an hour in this way when things do not seem to be urgent. Not so with Mr. Wilson. He bethinks himself of something he noticed and is off to see to it. So it is that he shovels the snow off his stacks; stirs his oats in the bin after threshing, or at least tests them to see if they are heating; remembers to bring some lime for the chickens as he passes the 'kil;' puts a little fire in his cellar, if it should be a cold one, on extra cold nights; rubs the sprouts off his potatoes in the spring; rolls up his empty sacks and hangs them by a wire out of the reach of mice; washes and oils his harness on wet days; is careful to look to the nuts and bolts of his waggons and machinery, and to notice if the tires need resetting; lays fence poles across some bad mud-hole which may prove a trap for his stock; and takes some half-day to blast out a point of rock that sticks up in his meadow.

Such matters as these and five hundred more like them Mr. Wilson attends to, as he would say, while he is resting. Saved is gained; to prevent loss as important as to get more, and he sees to it that every leak he can think of is tightly caulked. A constant comprehensive vigilance acting with an orderly habit of mind is for ever at work on his ranche; and stock, land, and buildings show its beneficent effect. Everything is ship-shape. His tools are in their place; his fences are in good repair, his gates in working order; outhouses, sheds, stables, all good of their kind. There is nothing fancy about them. Sometimes on English ranches you will find these too good, but Mr. Wilson knows of his own knowledge what is necessary and what merely a counsel of perfection.

While such a man as Mr. Wilson, if not late in taking rest, is at least diligent in rising early and eating the bread of carefulness year after year, he is tolerably sure to have his efforts seconded by the no less unremitting industry of a most efficient wife. A helpmate who understands the business 'clear through' as she does, and in whom the feminine capacity for detail is quickened by the same overmastering desire to 'get there' that spurs him along into what might almost be called a passionate assiduity, should, when Mr. Wilson is taking stock of his possessions, rank in a class by herself at the head and front of them all. Item—My wife—should appear as the principal asset. 'She is worth more to him than two hired men,' one hears the neighbours say now and again of some notable ranchwoman. Such a woman

will, unless the family be very large, come very near to paying the running expenses of the house out of her eggs and butter, thus setting free any funds that her husband may get hold of after the ranche expenses have been settled. While they were still struggling to get started, and any and all ways of making a living had to be resorted to, she disdained to turn her hand to nothing she 'saw a dollar in.' If their home was on a road along which much travel passed, she kept a road-house or stopping-place for travellers, perhaps, thereby adding from twenty-five to a hundred per cent. to her many cares, as she would never know how many to expect at a meal, and would often have to get two or three editions of the same meal. All the time she had her few cows and many chickens to attend to, and in the summer her garden. As matters prospered with them and as the stock increased, they found themselves able to dispense with the road-house business, but her never-flagging energy kept her just as busy, though perhaps not so 'driven' as she used to find herself. Very likely she did the milking herself, mothered the young calves, had more young chickens and earlier ones than any other woman in the neighbourhood, got her three meals a day ready with incredible neatness and despatch, kept Mr. Wilson's old clothes in a marvellous state of repair, made her own dresses, and, to cut a long story short, was occupied at a high rate of speed from early morning till she sank wearied but unconquered into her bed at night.

It will easily be believed that working at this high pressure the good lady's temper is sometimes strained to the breaking-point, and her husband will, if he is a man of ordinary wisdom, and knows what is good for him, refrain from any action which may prove the one thing more than she can bear. Let the following strictly true instance of the consequences of neglecting this precaution be taken to heart by intending ranchmen who happen to read this. A ranchman, whom we will call Mr. Thorp, hailed two of his neighbours who were riding past his house. 'Say,' he called out, 'wish you'd hitch your horses and help me brand a couple of calves.' Being in no special hurry they got off and climbed into the corral. 'Where's your axe?' said one of them. 'I'll be splitting some wood for a fire.' 'Oh! never mind about a fire for this little job,' said Mr. Thorp, 'I'll heat the irons in the stove,' and he went into the house for the purpose. Almost immediately, however, the door was flung open again and the irons were seen flying through the air, followed by Mr. Thorp himself,

who, if not actually slung out of the house by the collar, at least had his departure so accelerated by a violent impulse from behind that he had to take several quick steps in an exceedingly undignified attitude, to the unqualified amusement of the two spectators in the corral, who could see the whole performance. However, when Mr. Thorp reached the corral, carrying the still cold irons, he found his friends sitting on the fence smoking and discussing the topics of the day with an elaborate pretence of having seen or heard nothing amiss. 'Guess we'd better build a fire out here, boys,' said Mr. Thorp. 'My wife wants the stove,' and the work was finished without allusion to what had passed. 'You see,' said Mr. Thorp, some time after, yielding to the two-fold seduction of a couple of glasses of whisky and a sympathetic auditor, 'the trouble at my house is, I've got a woman who wants to wear the pants.'

Two such people as Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, each thought capable in their own respective departments, working to a common end and urged by the same ambition, are bound to succeed anywhere. As usual, the man gets the greater part of the credit, but rightfully half belongs to his wife, and in contrasting him with the Englishman, whose English wife of his own class cannot, however hard she may try, help him as Mrs. Wilson helps her husband, this fact should not be forgotten. Mr. Wilson gets a great pull here. Whether it is unavoidable or not is not the question. We are in search of what Americans call the 'cold facts.'

The American ranchman, then, seems to have the best of the Englishman all through the working of the ranch. When it comes to disposing of its products he does not surrender his advantage. The main product of each ranch is beef. Mr. Wilson's beef steers are most likely rather better than the Englishman's. Each man has kept them two winters, but the American, with longer practice and exercising the anxious care which characterises him, has got a better growth on his, and they are actually worth, perhaps, a couple of dollars a head more than his neighbour's. As regards the selling of them, each man is pretty apt to get all that the beef buyer will give. Beef appears to be the one thing for which the ranchman does not have to look for a buyer. The demand for steers is nearly always greater than the supply, and though the market varies, of course, any man who has beef to sell will, in the course of a season, have three or four men coming to him in search of it. The beef buyer being a busy man does not lose much time in bargaining. He knows the

ranchmen are all posted on prices, and as he really wants the cattle he soon comes to his limit. With him, then, the Englishman has comparatively little difficulty in trading. Of course, as he and Mr. Johnson, the beef buyer, ride into the pasture to look at the steers, some difference of opinion may arise as to their probable weight and consequent value, and Mr. Johnson has the great advantage of knowing what he is doing better than the Englishman, and, for the matter of that, better than any of the ranchmen, native or English, with whom he is trading. Mr. Johnson, whose figures and signature on a cheque are at once the despair and amusement of the bank clerks, can, as he glances at a beef steer, come within a marvellously few pounds of its actual weight, and this accomplishment he has found more useful to him in his business than would have been a liberal education. He makes use of it chiefly to set a limit in his own mind, beyond which he will not go, and the Englishman, knowing from the papers what the market price is, and knowing, too, what his neighbours got for their steers, and how his compare with them, is, as was said, pretty apt to get all that Mr. Johnson will give.

But it is in trading and trafficking with his neighbours, with the men he sees every day and with whom he is on friendly terms, that Mr. Wilson gains most on our English friend. It is hard for a man who has, as most of our countrymen of this class have out here, the character of being scrupulously fair, knows it, and wants to maintain it, to hold his own with people whose moral standard is less exalted. The web of Mr. Wilson's conscience is often made of some tough and elastic material that will bear a considerable strain; if the motive appears to him adequate, a very considerable one. All fair in trading, as in love and war, would seem to be the custom of the country, and the Englishman usually declines to accept these conditions. Handicapped as he already is by less knowledge and skill and practice, he is still further penalised by scruple. With his neighbours, anything short of a downright lie is considered admissible; any *suggestio falsi*, any *suppressio veri*. Trading is a game in which each man expects to fight for his own hand, and if he is beaten it is his own fault. Naturally many amusing stories are in circulation as to how Jones handled Smith, and how Brown got rid of some worthless horse he had 'got stuck' with. One of the best among those that the writer has heard, and which may be new to English readers, was told him lately as true of a ranchman of his acquaintance. It seems that a man came to this ranchman with a team of horses,

one of which was a good deal bigger than the other, and asked if he had anything that would mate the bigger one. 'I've got a job hauling lumber,' he said, 'and I haven't got quite team enough. Only,' he added, 'don't give me anything that isn't true' (that is, technically, good to pull), 'because I can get along with what I've got, but if I can get a horse to mate this big one of mine I can do a good deal better.' The ranchman showed him a good-sized horse, and asked how that would suit him. 'He'd do all right,' said the teamster, after looking him over, 'if he's true; will he pull?' 'Pull!' said the other, 'it would do your heart good to see him pull,' and the trade was made, the smaller horse turned over together with a few dollars in money, the 'boot' or difference in value, to the ranchman, and the new acquisition harnessed up in his place and driven off. In about twenty minutes the man was back, this time in a towering rage. 'Forgot something?' blandly inquired the ranchman. 'No, sir,' roared the teamster; 'I'm here to give you a thumping for doin' me up like this. The very first hill I come to that horse I got from you quit me, wouldn't begin to take hold with nothin' but the waggon behind him—just threw his head over the other horse and kicked. You've busted up my winter's job and now you've got to take your medicine.' 'Hold on,' said the other, 'what did I tell you about that horse?' 'Tell me?' roared the teamster; 'I asked you if he'd pull, and you said he would, and that man of yours was standing by and heard you.' 'Guess not,' said the ranchman coolly. 'You asked me if the horse would pull, and what I said was, it would do your heart good to see him pull, and *wouldn't it?*' On reflection the teamster had to admit that this was so, and that he had been, as he allowed, fairly beat. They exchanged again, however, according to the writer's informant, and parted good friends.

In this game the Englishman does not shine. If, as his conscience grows tougher, he attempts to meet the natives on their own ground and fight them with their own weapons, he is no match for them. But in many cases, perhaps in a majority of cases, his self-respect forbids him to attempt it. He stands rather in his little community as the representative of probity and fair dealing, and receives virtue's proverbial reward.

Here then Mr. Wilson gains again, getting a little the best of every deal he makes, while the Englishman is more apt to get a little the worst of it. If one man gains two dollars and a half every time he trades and another man loses the same amount, it does not take a Senior Wrangler to discover that there is a

difference of five dollars between them. Mr. Wilson should not be judged too harshly. He is acting in accordance with his lights, following the custom he has practised and seen practised all his life. He is, naturally, the man to come out on top. As he increases in substance and standing in the community he gains another advantage. Men begin to expect to pay him a good price. He has the reputation of having good stock, they know he is not compelled to sell for lack of means to hold, and it is conceded that he is the best judge of values in this section of the country. If he says such an animal is worth so much, his statement carries weight. 'If you don't want it at that figure,' he says, 'leave it; I can get that out of it.' One often hears it said by some man who has a cow or a horse that he thinks a good deal of, 'If so and so,' naming some well-to-do ranchman, 'had that animal, he would get any price in reason that he chose to ask for it, but I can't.' Mr. Wilson is supposed to know. Very differently do the neighbours approach the Englishman. Whether he knows or not none of them think he does, and all are convinced in their own minds that they know better. They advance all kinds of arguments, and prove to him that the price he is asking is exorbitant, and if he refuses to come down they go away and leave him. In the same way, it is by this time very much easier even for Mr. Wilson to exact obedience from his hands than it used to be, and incomparably less of an effort for him than for the Englishman. The fact of his being the most thriving ranchman in the community proves to demonstration that he knows what he is about, and his orders are received with respect and carried out with diligence. He has the prestige which attaches to success as well as its corollary, the success that attaches to prestige.

But let the Englishman give an order which involves some extra trouble or time, and see how many reasons are brought forward to show how unnecessary such a step, nay, how mistaken. If he insists, what a reluctant obedience is given, perhaps, by the same man who, working a short time before for Mr. Wilson, never offered an objection. Better for the Englishman if he does insist, but see how much more of an effort is required from him than from the native of experience, especially when he is so often haunted, so to say, by the feeling that his experience is not great enough to make him absolutely sure that he is right. His man has often been right before when a doubtful point has come up, and possibly is so this time. Still, again, better for him on the whole if he insists. Anything is better for him than to let the notion get

about in the neighbourhood that his hands can 'run' him. Experience will come if he does make mistakes, but the habit of yielding grows, and with its growth respect is shaken, wanes, and finally disappears. In this matter, again, note how difficult a path the Englishman has to tread. He has to find the mean between facility and 'bull headedness.' He needs advice and should not be above taking it, yet must decide the exact point at which advice shades off into presumption, and then and there put his foot down.

Mr. Wilson's business never leaves him. It occupies his thoughts all his waking hours. His concentration of ideas on the main issue gives him an advantage over a man whose thoughts wander over a wider range. Pondering all the time, plans come into his head which would hardly occur to a man less devoted. Riding on the range in the fall, Mr. Wilson notices a cow pretty well advanced in years, with a calf a day or two old. 'There,' he thinks, 'it's going to take three tons of hay to winter that old jezebel, with that thing a-pulling at her. She'll be as poor as a crow in the spring, and then, likely, she'll go and do this again next fall. She's broke to milk, too—she ought to make some one a winter cow.' Turning it over in his mind that evening, he lays the matter before his faithful counsellor. 'Mary,' he says, 'that old spot cow we milked two summers ago's got a calf. It ain't going to pay to winter her. What we'd best do with her?' Mrs. Wilson thinks awhile. 'Tell you,' she says presently; 'Mrs. Jones over on Fox Creek's got a young baby, and I know they want a winter cow. I guess they'd be glad of her.' 'Could they pay for her if they got her?' asks her husband. 'Don't suppose they've got the cash, but they've got a pile of hay there. Mebbe they'd winter some stock for you.' 'Jones is a good hand with stock too,' reflects Mrs. Wilson aloud. 'He wintered twenty head for Pete Coghlan last year, and Pete said they were better than what he wintered at home.' Next morning Mr. Wilson rides over to Fox Creek, about eight miles off, timing himself to arrive about noon, when Jones will be at home. He finds the family at dinner, and is made welcome with Western hospitality. No allusion is made to business during the meal, but after dinner, when the men go outside to 'look around,' he broaches the subject, passing lightly over the delicate question of the cow's age, and laying some little stress on Mr. Jones living so far from the road, and the trouble he must have in disposing of his hay. Finally the deal is closed. Mr. Jones is to winter ten head of yearlings at three dollars a head for the cow, if she suits. 'You can come and get the cow any day you've a mind to,' says Mr.

Wilson as he leaves the house, which they had entered again to get Mrs. Jones's opinion. 'Good-day; you folks want to come down now, all of you.' 'We will, and you come back and bring Mrs. Wilson with you,' is the answer, invitation and reply being the invariable formula on taking leave in Western country districts. As he rides home Mr. Wilson reflects that he has done pretty well. He could not have got more than twenty-five dollars in cash for the cow and calf, and he has got the equivalent of thirty. The ten yearlings will eat perhaps ten tons of hay. His hay, being on the road, is worth a dollar and a half a ton more than Jones's. Jones's hay will do them just as much good, and fifteen dollars are saved. The Jones family needed a cow, and Mr. Wilson has the comfort of feeling himself a philanthropist who is himself included in his own benefaction.

Mr. Wilson is, unlike many stockmen, careful to keep his herd weeded out. He has been doing this for years, getting rid of the 'unthrifty' ones which eat so much in the winter and seem to get so little good from it. Many ranchmen pay little attention to this. Anxious to increase their herds, a cow with them is a cow, and as long as she will bring a calf they keep her. Perhaps they fail to notice in the early winter how this one and that one ought to be favoured, and when in the early spring they see them 'thin as rails,' they merely remark that 'they haven't done well somehow. They had the same show as the rest too.' Certainly they had the same show, but they needed a better show than the others, and Mr. Wilson would have given it them, resolving, however, to dispose of them next summer. Not every ranchman has an 'eye for stock' like Mr. Wilson, who notes these things by instinct. No other man in the country can show a bunch of cattle averaging so well as his, so smooth and round and so much of a size. 'Wilson don't feed no more hay than any one else,' you hear it said; 'he don't feed near as much as Brown, but his stalk looks a heap the best.' No accident this. It is management. The ragged, hipped, gaunt, hungry-looking ones have been sold the first time they were fat, or as near fat as they would get, and he has by constant patience and attention at last got a herd to suit him. He gets a better result at less expense.

So again with his waggons and machinery. He is careful to keep them in a good state of repair, and careful to get rid of them when he has had the best of them, before they get too bad to be easily disposed of. 'I believe I'll let some one else wear that out,' he thinks, contemplating his mowing machine. He has had this,

perhaps, five years, and it has done him excellent service. It is still, thanks to his careful handling, a good machine. But Mr. Wilson knows that over rather rough meadows, as they are in his part of the country, five years is the best part of a machine's life. He noticed last season that it was beginning to show the first signs of decadence. He reflects, too, that a man loses lots of time 'monkeying' with an old machine, just when time is precious. He takes some opportunity, therefore, to trade it off, being by this time in such a position financially that he is able at any time to spare the cash to replace any article he disposes of. He is always ready to trade his half-worn waggons and machines for young stock. That is the kind of trade he likes. They will grow into money while the other things are going down. If he can't find a chance to get rid of the machines this way, he may be able to work it in on a man's wages, as he often does with the stock alluded to above, which he does not himself want to keep. He often makes some such deal as this part of the bargain when he hires a man. 'I've got twenty-five acres of sage brush I want cleared off,' he says to some one who 'strikes' him for a job. 'I'll give two and a quarter an acre if you'll take a cow in part pay.' More often than not, especially if there will still be a little cash coming when the job is done, the man agrees. It is very much harder for the Englishman to do this. Rightly or wrongly, he is looked upon as the man with money, and most of his transactions have to be cash deals. When he suggests working in a cow or a horse, they shake their heads. 'I'd like to, but I can't do it just now. I'm needing the cash,' they say, and walk off. Perhaps next day they hire to Mr. Wilson on just about the same terms, or a little less than the Englishman offered. On the other hand, if they come of their own accord to buy a horse or cow from the Englishman, they seldom propose to pay the money for it, but nearly always to work it out. At first he is nearly sure to accept an offer or two of this kind, and they take the animal, promising to help him whenever he needs them. 'When you want me, whistle and I'll come any time,' they say, and by-and-by he whistles and often keeps whistling. 'Things have gone so different from what they looked for, they can't possibly come now,' they say, or their wives are sick and they can't leave home, or one or other of a thousand excuses. When finally they do come, their interest in the work is gone. They have already had their pay and they are 'working for a dead horse,' as the slang phrase is for paying a six months' or year old debt in this way. The Englishman gets bravely

over this practice after one or two trials of it, but he is lucky or an unusually good manager if he is not caught once or twice like this at the outset of his career.

All these things, together with a wise economy that knows where to be lavish and where sparing, constitute that most desirable quality of 'management' in which Mr. Wilson so conspicuously excels. There is nothing particularly scientific in his method. He has no theories, and never read a book on agriculture in his life. His knowledge of the properties of various soils is not very extensive; he knows loam from 'dobé,' and knows that the big sage brush is the best small grain land. He has never studied the system of rotation of crops, but 'guesses' that the 'patch' has been in potatoes or oats long enough and he had better 'change off' for a year or two. His hauling the manure from his stables, sheds, and corrals, and spreading it on his meadows, partly to get it out of the way and partly because he knows it does good, is the extent of his attention to the manure question. Neither is he a scientific stock-breeder. His cattle and horses are not 'fine stock,' bred to a hair, nor has he paid any attention to stock-feeding in a scientific way. His business has not required it of him.

Many Englishmen, then, understanding that Western ranching and stock raising do not call for an expensive and elaborate theoretical training, believe that it is within the power of any willing and capable person to succeed in these pursuits. Theoretically, perhaps it is. But if these gentlemen without Mr. Wilson's special qualifications undertake with a light heart to copy him, they will, as they gaze up at him from the bottom of the abyss in which a few years of misdirected endeavour, accompanied by much physical and mental discomfort, will land them, perhaps be willing to confess that the man who has fought his way to success where so many find failure is, in his way, remarkable. And, perhaps, through the ranchman's own mind, as now in the evening of his days he surveys the thriving homestead which the labour of his own hands has redeemed from the wilderness, the thought, dimly formulated, may pass, that here has been a part which, if humble, has on the whole been ably and worthily played; and a glow may spread through his heart as he reflects that his life at least has not been spent in ministering to some fanciful demand of a complex civilisation; that to him rather has been allotted a clearly defined part in the universal scheme.

J. R. E. S.

At the Sign of the Ship.

SOMEWHERE, lately, an eminent novelist, pursuing the weary feud of author *versus* critic, said that he did not see why reviewers should publish their opinions about novels, any more than about loaves of bread. But loaves of bread are not sent to critics for review. If they were reviewers would speak their minds with exemplary freedom. A novelist need not send his works to the press. They never would be missed if he refrained. He invites an opinion and he gets it. He has less reason to grumble than most people, for every one who reads novels, and has, at least, some practical knowledge of the human nature in which they deal.

* * *

Coleridge, writing of this very subject, avers that authors (he probably includes all artists) are not more 'irritable' than other people. But other people are not tested by the same kind of criticism. 'Suppose a review set on foot, the object of which was to criticise all the chief works presented to the public by our ribbon weavers, calico printers, cabinet makers, and china manufacturers, a review conducted in the same spirit, and which should take the same freedom with personal character as our literary journals. . . . The irritability of trade would soon reduce the resentment of poets into mere shadow fights in the comparison.' This is probable enough. But the tradesmen in question don't, in fact, send ribbons and china, and invite comment—except, perhaps, to some ladies' journals, which, in such cases, are more than lenient.

* * *

Coleridge had suffered cruelties from critics, especially from the *Edinburgh Review*. Hazlitt, it is believed, had as good as called him a lunatic, and had stated that, if Scott and Byron praised *Christabel*, this was in expectation of praise from Coleridge. Reviewers, for political or personal reasons, had done their best to

ruin S. T. C. Yet, he says, 'I do seriously believe and profess, that I owe full two-thirds of whatever reputation and publicity I happen to possess . . . to anonymous critics . . . and to satirists.' S. T. C. was not in good humour, for he kindly reckoned 'novels, and tales of chivalry, in prose or rhyme, as amusements on the same level as spitting over a bridge.' What do our angry novelists think of this view of their craft, entertained by a man whom they cannot pretend to despise? In short, Coleridge was embittered, and scarcely set an example of amenity, but he admitted his debt to critics.

* * *

One must again remind the indignant novelist that he is much better treated than other people. Take history, and, as examples, Father Gerard's, and Dr. Gardiner's books on the Gunpowder Plot. Out of some hundred critics, how many can we expect to have any knowledge of the subject at first hand? Even lacking this, how many care to afford time for a steady comparison of the facts and logic of both antagonists? The intricacies of old plans and prints of the Houses of Parliament can only be understood, if at all, by rigid attention. This I, for one, have not yet given. On the whole I side with Dr. Gardiner, because Father Gerard does not seem to me to have a definite hypothesis (as that Cecil got up the whole plot), nor to test that hypothesis in contact with all the facts. The evidence against Cecil is prejudiced, or remote, or hearsay, or third-hand, or anonymous. One would need to be an expert in MSS. and to have access to the Hatfield Original Papers before one could come to an opinion about some points. There was plenty of unscrupulous cruelty on the winning side, but I see no vestige of proof that Cecil suborned the plot. All of Dr. Gardiner's arguments do not appear to me to be valid, but every one must admire his method, I think, and his historical power of sympathy with a few brave but maddened and desperate conspirators. There may be—I believe there are—errors in fact (one Dr. Gardiner has himself corrected), but the balance of evidence and of probability seem to be on his side. Indeed, one fact alone convinces me. The lives and deaths of Percy and Catesby were those of reckless, puzzle-headed men, not of 'decoy ducks' and informers. One person who played the part which, on Father Gerard's hypothesis, or suspicion, was theirs, I recently met in history. He was to get up, and betray, a combined Whig and Tory Rising in Scotland. He did get it up, betray, and thwart it,

in 1707. He did not cling to it, and perish with it, as Catesby and Percy did. These unhappy men were true to their associates. No other decoy ducks of Cecil's, in this affair, are indicated. Therefore there were, I believe, no such decoy ducks. A critic who is not a specialist may come to a conclusion like this. But we must expect a host of hasty reviewers to be led by a great name like that of Father Gerard's opponent, and, perhaps, by Protestant tradition. We can wait for Father Gerard's rebutter, but we are already got among details that are puzzling and intricate. The novelist has really the better chance with critics, for his work seldom needs special knowledge on the reader's side, and ought never to be a severe test of patient attention. Yet he is often heard grumbling, while the historian suffers in silence.

* *

After seeing *Gentlemen v. Players*, the Universities, and some County matches, it is curious and amusing to have had an opportunity of beholding some girlish cricket. One could never have expected it to be so good in style. The young ladies field very smartly, and throw the wicket down from a considerable distance. The slows do not seem puzzling, but some over-hand bowling is straight, and of a good length, though not remarkable, yet, for 'work.' The batswomen drive pretty hard and low, and cut neatly through the slips. When they have learned to hit to leg, they are a little apt to do so, off the middle stump; with the usual result. The wicket-keeping is beyond belief, and no words are too strong for the smartness of 'silly point,' and of a kind of silly short leg. 'Silly,' of course, does not mean 'foolish,' but 'additional,' in this old terminology. In fact, I would liefer see well-trained girls play cricket than myself play atrociously bad golf. When Auchterlonie goes out in 36, and back in 35, as he did lately, the bungling unteachable golfer gets rather tired of his pastime. When Auchterlonie broke the record of 72 (Mr. Tait's) he very nearly got 70, by holing a difficult putt. He was playing the best of Mr. Crockett's and Mr. Wilson's balls, giving a half, and he won by four holes: I think Mr. Crockett's round was 86.

* *

Speaking of Mr. Seaman's parodies, Mr. Quiller Couch says, or quotes, 'the best of styles cannot be parodied,' and remarks that you can parody *Peter Bell*, but not 'The Sonnet on the Extinction of the Venetian Republic.' Perhaps it would be safer to say that

you don't want to parody the sonnet, whereas *Peter Bell* cried out for parody. 'You can parody Carlyle's prose : you cannot parody Newman's.' But you cannot parody the poems of — (I do not wish to be personal) merely because the poems of — have no mark or note peculiar to themselves. 'You can parody excess or defect, but not the golden mean,' or the copper or electroplated mean. Tennyson, Scott, Wordsworth, Crabbe, Byron, Dr. Johnson, Edgar Poe, are very susceptible of parody, but it would be a bore to parody *The Task*, or the *Trials of Temper*. Yet the styles of the great men just mentioned are better than the styles of Hayley and Cowper. Mr. Swinburne it is easy to make imitations of, but they are always bad, and few parodies of him are good. I should not know how to set about a parody of Mr. Le Gallienne's verse, as Mr. Seaman appears to have done, and that is not because the verse is bad, nor yet, perhaps, because it is too good. Never have I seen but one good parody of Mr. Stevenson's prose, nor one of Mr. Pater or Mr. Meredith, both of whose styles are very marked. Parody does not seem to me to aim at 'chastising' bad writing, but rather to amuse by burlesquing good writing. There is a modern poet who cannot be parodied, because he 'goes one better' than the absurdities which the parodist may devise. Nobody can admire Tennyson's *Mariana* more than myself, yet it certainly amused me once, long ago, to write *Mariana in Kensington*. There appeared to be something cheerful in the application of the sad lingering cadences to the case of a maiden weary of the dust, and noise, and heat, and brass-bands of the suburb. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that the trick is well done, most readers would be diverted, but their appreciation of the original poem would remain undimmed. 'Sobriety and proportion,' as Mr. Quiller Couch says, are excellent qualities, but these *Mariana* possesses, and yet is very capable of being parodied. Whatever the qualities may be on which parody can lay hands, literature would become very dull if they vanished. I cannot but think that originality of style is one of these qualities, and that writing may defy parody, not because it is too good, but because it is not good enough ; or is too bad, and so defies competition. To 'chastise,' if 'part of the work' of parody, is, I fancy, the smallest part. Most writers accept parody as a compliment : most readers, of any humour, like a parody, if good, while they love the work parodied. Scott, and, I think, Mr. Swinburne, have parodied themselves, and their contemporaries, and Crabbe averred that Scott's imitation of him contained all that he could do, and some-

thing more. In fact, parody rather reminds one of the fond hard names which a mother applies to her child, in sport, than of anything in the way of serious castigation. We do not parody verse or prose which we do not care for. George Eliot took another view, very lofty and severe, of the iniquity of parodies, and, by the way, it would not be easy to parody *her* poems. One feels no temptation to sport with that moral Muse of hers in any way, whereas the moral Muse of Wordsworth tempts the parodist. The subject, like most subjects of mirth, is full of contradictiousness.

* * *

The worst kind of parody is that to which a writer of genius invites my attention, because, saith he, he cannot keep his temper when he thinks of it. There is an example in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for August, 'The Raid of Carlisle, a Pseudo-Ingoldsbean Lay,' by Lord Ernest Hamilton. Mr. John Knox said, in a sermon in the St. Andrews Town Kirk, that '*all* Hamiltons are murderers.' Proposing to keep my own temper, I would make the milder assertion that a gentleman of Lord Ernest's name ought not to murder the noble ballad of *Kinmont Willie* by telling the immortal story in the manner of Ingoldsby, not improved. Twelve solid pages of burlesque verse not only slay but bury the *Kinmont* for the occasion. Salkeld is smitten more deeply than by Dickie of Dryhope's spear when he is written about *thus*:

So without more ado he artistically drew
A description in full, from his own point of view,
Of fires and slaughters in various quarters,

and so on. Then Lord Scrope

Bluntly requested the other to hook it.

This has an air of the Cockney school of mirth. And what is 'a Border Apolycus'? Can *Autolycus* be intended? Does 'indentures' rhyme to 'censures' on the Border? When we know that 'the water was great, and mickle o' spait'—that wan water, Esk—Lord Ernest finds it diverting to call it 'the colour of strong Bohea,' and to make 'water' rhyme to 'Guinness porter.' Where the warden said,

'He's either himsel' a devil frae Hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I would not have ridden that wan water
For all the gold in Christentie,'

Lord Ernest makes him say—

‘I’d see myself cussed ere I’d ever entrust
My form to that cataract’s angry lust.’

These are examples of parody applied to a noble topic, not to a form of verse. It would be as good a deed to turn *The Wife of Usher’s Well* into the lingo of the music-hall costermonger as to exaggerate the prolix Ingoldsby jingle in application to the bold Buccleugh.

* * *

How curiously information drops in, when once we are interested in a subject. Perhaps the reader has never heard of a work styled *Tommy Potts*?

In an autobiographical letter, Richardson, the author of *Pamela*, says that he imitated Tommy Potts when he was young. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his introduction to Richardson’s novels, confesses to his ignorance of Tommy. I also was in darkness, but from a note of Scott’s to a passage of *The Battle of the Books*, where Swift talks of *Tommy Potts*, I learn that *Tommy* is a black-letter ballad, much esteemed by curious collectors. Finally I discover ‘The History of Tommy Potts, or the Lover’s Quarrell. Printed and sold in Aldermay Church Yard. No date. About 1700. Curious Cuts,’ in Messrs. Pickering and Chatto’s catalogue. Tommy is priced at five shillings, and if one is lucky one may win the early model of the author of *Pamela*. But to pay 450*l.* for the first edition of Walton’s *Compleat Angler* (1653) is beyond the power of a journeyman of letters. It is a good deal of money, and, if I had it to make ducks and drakes with, I could find ducks more enticing, and more desirable drakes. The example is described as ‘very crisp.’ One has read Walton before, but not *The Divine Cosmographer* (1640), which, it seems, includes ‘a very interesting discourse on Angling,’ ‘delineated in a Tractate on the viii Psalm.’ How angling can be got into the Psalms is not obvious. In Psalm viii. ‘the fish of the sea’ are just hinted at, and probably W. Hodgson, author of *The Divine Cosmographer*, made this a discourse for a treatise on salmon. He must have been as digressive as Coleridge or De Quincey. Does opium-eating lead to digressiveness? one wonders. It is a question for scientific psychologists, but more than two examples are needed for a conclusion. What follows, I fear, can only interest psychologists; and the weather, at the time of writing, is perhaps too warm for arduous studies.

* * *

In *Hallucinations and Illusions* (Walter Scott) Herr Parish discusses a question which most psychologists have shirked. 'The waking hallucinations of healthy persons are more or less completely ignored by them,' says Herr Parish. Now these occasional waking hallucinations of the sane and healthy are what the public calls 'wraiths' and 'ghosts.' When the false appearance of one person to another occurs at, or very near, the moment of the first person's death, or marriage, or any crisis, then people are apt to suppose that the appearance is, somehow, caused by the action of one distant mind on another—'Telepathy.' Herr Parish does not accept the arguments in favour of this theory, and his own ideas are worth study.

* * *

One common fallacy he gets rid of: if you see anything, or anybody, which, or who, is not there, people are wont to say that you 'fancied you saw it,' or 'believed you saw it.' Now, remarks Herr Parish, 'as a matter of fact, to "believe one sees," and "to see," are two expressions meaning the same thing . . . A hallucination is, then, a sense-perception, like any other, only there happens to be no object there. That is the whole difference.' Thus nothing is explained by referring false perceptions to 'fancy:' what we want to know is why and how 'fancy' (perhaps once in a healthy lifetime) took that particular shape.

* * *

Now, skipping hallucinations in madness, drink, disease, under narcotics, under hypnotism (for in all such cases the patient's condition is as abnormal as his experience), we come to 'crystal visions.' Here a healthy person, wide awake, looks into a glass ball, and perceives persons, faces, places, known or unknown to him or her. The common scientific explanations are 'fudge,' 'fable,' 'fancy,' or 'liver.' Herr Parish deals in none of these scientific solvents. His solution is 'Dissociation,' 'the dissociation of consciousness,' and this theory he applies all round, to all false perceptions of every description.

* * *

Now, what is 'Dissociation'? It is defined as 'that state in which the nerve stimulus no longer flows through the channels determined by habit, and by the co-operation of simultaneous

stimuli, because inhibitions or obstructions, whether from pathological or physiological causes, have been set up in the normal association paths, or obstructions which normally exist in other connecting tracts have been weakened, or altogether abolished.' I know not whether the reader understands this highly poetical language. But 'dissociation' is, clearly, the exact reverse of our old friend 'The Association of Ideas.' When our ideas do not follow the beaten tracks of association, then we are liable to see, or hear, or feel, what is not there. And, if you see, or hear, or feel what is not there, then it is because your ideas are 'dissociated.' The hallucination is 'an anomalous reaction of the brain to sensory stimuli.' Now one would say that this is just the reverse of the facts. Your bed-clothes slip off; you, being asleep, feel cold; you dream of icebergs and Polar bears—that is, you have, in sleep, a false perception of icebergs and so on. Why? Just because your ideas are *not* dissociated; just because the idea of cold is associated with the North Pole, the bears of that region, Dr. Nansen, and so forth. Shakspeare has said all that is necessary on that head, in Mercutio's speech on Queen Mab.

* * *

Again, take one or two hallucinations which actually occurred. A., M.P., standing alone in a particular part of the House of Commons, sees B. (a person of marked appearance) come out of one door and go into another room. B. has been dead for years. Or, A. sees B. come out of a room in a dark blue dress, and, on instantly entering the room she has left, finds her there in a white dress! She has been there for half an hour. How does 'dissociation' begin to explain these false perceptions? If dissociation means, so to say, the momentary sleep of part of A.'s brains, *that* is not such a rare condition! If either of the A.'s was 'dissociated' on these occasions, they are both just as much 'dissociated' every day of their lives. I know both A.'s well enough to say *that*. But they have had no other verifiable hallucinations. There is, in short, far too much of the assumed cause, dissociation, to far too little of the assumed effect, hallucination.

* * *

Herr Parish now criticises the collected statistics of hallucinations said to coincide, more or less closely, with the moment of death. He does not agree that the facts prove Telepathy, or

action of one distant mind on another. Here I go far in agreement with him. The necessary statistics, for a dozen good reasons, simply cannot be collected. Collectors select cases; narrators, consciously or not, improve on the stories. The stories are of no use, unless recorded instantly in writing, and legally witnessed. One may have one's own opinion, but it is not science, and is influenced by personal experience, uniform tradition, and so forth. But, returning to crystal visions, Herr Parish thinks that they do not occur 'in the normal consciousness.' The seer is too much 'dissociated.' Now, 'Miss X.' (whom Herr Parish cites) says that, on looking at a glass ball, ink, or what not, her consciousness is entirely normal. In reply, Herr Parish cites a friend of Miss X., who says that her expression was *not* normal when she was *not* looking at a glass ball. This is hardly logical in Herr Parish! I have often seen people staring at glass balls, with or without success. They certainly seemed as normal as if they were reading a novel, or engaged, as they usually were, at the time, in ordinary conversation. Yet, in several cases, they described visions of places and people unknown to them, but well known to myself, or to other bystanders. For example, I filled a smooth decanter with water for C. (a well-known golfer), and he saw the hall of a house, with certain marked peculiarities, including a large white cat on the stairs. The house and cat were Miss X.'s; A. had seen none of them; I knew the house, the cat I was not acquainted with. A. was as normal as possible; we dropped matches into the water to test their effect on the vision.

* * *

I could give a dozen such instances, and I really do not see where 'dissociation' comes in, as an explanation. I have no theory of Telepathy, or anything else. But, as this kind of thing keeps occurring constantly, while the looker in the glass is carrying on a conversation, I really do not see how 'dissociation' or drowsiness explains the circumstance. No doubt the looker in the glass tries to think about nothing in particular, not an easy thing to do. But he, or she, is wide awake, and why are pictures presented of people or places unknown to him or her, but known to you or me? There is here no room for a suspicion of 'drowsiness,' as Herr Parish avers. But, if there were, we are all drowsy a score of times in the week, yet only a very small proportion of us see any hallucinations. There is far too much drowsiness to

far too little hallucination. The coincidences also are left to be explained. Herr Parish seems to have witnessed no experiments himself, and, if he is going to be scientific on the subject, surely experiment is the normal way, especially as he drops 'fudge' and 'fancy.' I do not ask him, or any one, to take my stories for granted. They are good enough to excite my private curiosity, and to make me dissatisfied with 'dissociation.' Herr Parish appears to make, or observe, experiments in Hypnotism for himself. It is as easy, or easier, to make or observe the crystal experiments, which give no trouble, and, in fact (as far as I have seen), involve no kind of trance, or abnormal condition of mind or body. If they deserve to be written about at all, they deserve observation at first hand. The book, one should say, is mainly physiological, all about peripheries and cortices, and nervous tracts; it is not easy reading.

* * *

Another point occurs. Herr Parish mentions a man whose bicycle struck against some obstacle, in the dark. His friend, following him, had a false perception, in which he saw his predecessor on the path upset, though no accident really occurred. I once had a similar experience in broad daylight. I saw a cabman pitched off his perch, behind a hansom, over a tall hoarding. Nothing so bad happened; only the runaway horse was hurt. Now surely these two cases of hallucination arose from the *association*, not from the *dissociation*, of ideas. An accident was suggested; the mind outran the facts, and represented fictitious phenomena, in the direction led up to by the association of ideas. However, I may misunderstand Herr Parish; it is hardly probable that a learned philosopher would overlook objections so obvious, if they are valid.

ANDREW LANG.

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